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## CONTENTS

A HISTORY OF PEARCE, ARIZONA by Lillian Cheng .....	3
THE BACK PAGES .....	54

About the Cover: Commonwealth Company's mill in Pearce.  
(Courtesy Arizona Historical Society)

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## A HISTORY OF PEARCE, ARIZONA By Lillian Cheng

### The Common-Wealth Mine

With the advent of the modern mining era in Arizona in the mid-1800s, numerous towns and cities sprang up over the territory. One of the most famous, though no longer for mining, is Tombstone. Innumerable legends and a body of folklore popularized by books and movies swirl around this town.

It is in Pearce's history for Pearce sprang out of Tombstone.

Accounts of Tombstone's founding vary. The most accepted account is that a 30-year old prospector from Oregon named Ed Schieffelin in 1877 was scouring the hills of southeastern Arizona, using nearby Fort Huachuca as his supply base. When soldiers at the fort asked him what he had found, Schieffelin replied he'd not discovered anything yet. One of the soldiers then remarked, "Instead of a mine, you'll find a tombstone."<sup>1</sup> When Schieffelin later discovered rich-looking ore in the hills northwest of the Mule Mountains, he remembered the soldier's comment and named the spot "Tombstone." The staking of other mine claims quickly followed.

In the beginning, a few mining companies and individual prospectors and investors owned the Tombstone properties. Blasting through hardrock to extract ore, however, required large capital investments, which could only be supplied by large companies. Gradually, corporations with investors from urban centers on both coasts took over all the property. By 1881, 3,000 claims had been located although only 14 mines were fully equipped with hoisting works. At the producing mills, 140 stamps turned out \$500,000 in ore per month.<sup>2</sup>

News of the rich silver finds traveled rapidly and men began pouring into the district. Tombstone was laid out in 1879, about a mile from Schieffelin's original site. It was incorporated and became the seat of Cochise County.

Created in 1881 by the 11th Territorial Assembly, Cochise County encompasses 4,003,840 acres in the southeast corner of the territory. Much of the history of early Arizona occurred in this region, the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined.

By the end of 1879, Schieffelin's discovery had attracted 100 permanent residents in a collection of houses, cabins and tents in Tombstone. An additional 1,000 miners camped outside the perimeters. Two years later, the population had increased to about 7,000.

Following the typical cycle of 19th-century mining towns, the early days of Tombstone were notorious for prosperous saloons, busy prostitutes and quick-handed, short-tempered gunfighters. In the business district, two out of three buildings were saloons or gambling places. The tax on saloons and dance halls alone supported the city school system.<sup>3</sup>

Lawlessness characterized Tombstone's heyday. The incident for which Tombstone is probably most famous is the gunfight at the OK Corral on Oct. 26, 1881, which pitted the Earp brothers and Doc Holliday against the Clantons and McLowry<sup>4</sup> brothers. After the early 1880s, John Slaughter, another figure in Western folklore renowned for his toughness and integrity, became Cochise County Sheriff and Tombstone settled into a relatively peaceful period of a middle-aged mining town.



Within a decade after the initial rush, Tombstone was already declining. First, water flooded the mines at 500-foot level. In 1886 and 1887, the ground-level works of the Grand Central and Contention mines burned down, seriously crippling the miners' ability to pump out the underground water flow.

Moreover, as more countries, including the United States, began to adopt the gold standard for their currency, the demand for silver declined even as its production continued to rise in the western United States. From the statutory price of \$1.29 per ounce, the market price of silver fell to \$1.16 in 1876 and 65 cents in 1893.<sup>5</sup> Silver production no longer paid handsome dividends and disheartened Tombstone miners moved on to other mining camps. By 1890, Tombstone's population fell to 1,875 and it continued to decline during the 1890s.<sup>6</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Among the miners who left Tombstone for work elsewhere was a Cornishman by the name of John James Pearce. Born in England on July 23, 1844 to Thomas and Elizabeth Pearce, James early on pursued a mining career, traveling throughout England and Scotland to gain field experience. In 1864, he married Maria Curnow in England; four children were born to them, two daughters and two sons.

In the late spring of 1868, Pearce emigrated to the United States in search of more lucrative mining opportunities; his wife and children settled in America at some point as well. From the East Coast, Pearce successively moved to Colorado (1870), Idaho (1873), California (1876), Montana (1880), and Nevada.<sup>7</sup> Early in 1880 or perhaps 1881, the Pearces settled in Tombstone, where James Pearce — affectionately known as "Uncle Jimmie" — worked as a miner while his wife — "Ma Pearce" — operated a boarding house. As the mines played out, Pearce lost his job and, persuaded by his sons, set up a ranch in the Sulphur Springs Valley east of Tombstone.<sup>8</sup>

By the beginning of 1895, the Pearces were settled on their ranch on the eastern side of the Dragoon Mountains. James Pearce apparently was not much of a cattleman himself, preferring to leave most of the ranch chores to his two sons — John and William — who adapted readily to their new lifestyle.<sup>9</sup>

The exact events surrounding Pearce's discovery of gold on a hill six miles east of his ranch one day in the late winter of 1895 will probably never be known for certain. The account of Nell Murbarger, who visited Pearce several times in the 1950s, when there were still a few old-timers alive in the nearly defunct town, is representative (although more detailed than most) of the stories about Pearce's find:

"Uncle Jimmie said he had ridden to the top of a low hill about noon. After gazing out over the countryside for a while, he sat down on a rock ledge to eat the lunch Ma had fixed for him. As he ate he idly picked up a piece of quartz and knocked it against another piece of rock — as miners and ex-miners have been doing since the days of King Solomon. When both pieces of the rock fell apart, Jimmie saw with amazement both were dark with chloride of silver and rich in free gold."<sup>10</sup>

Another well-told version is that John Pearce, the son, was driving cattle over the hill and picked up a rock to throw at an uncooperative cow. Instead, noticing the rock's unusual weight, he took it to be assayed.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of who actually located the mineral site, the Pearces immediately sent samples from the ledge to be assayed. One went to the Department of Geology at the University of Arizona in Tucson and another was sent to an assayer in Denver, Col.<sup>12</sup> While waiting for the results, the Pearces quickly staked their claims, eventually 11 in total, along and around the original ledge.

On Feb. 18, 1895, John James Pearce filed the first claim, the "Commonwealth." Two days later, he filed the "Silver Wave" and "One and All." In subsequent days, from Feb. 25 when J.J. and William Pearce — presumably the sons — filed a joint claim for "Ocean Wave," to June 29 when the last Pearce claim was filed for "Horn Spoon," the Pearces added eight more location claims to the initial three.<sup>13</sup> Their richest location, "Silver Wave," covered a large portion of the ore vein which ran east to west along the north side of the hill.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, as generous as his nickname implied, James Pearce allegedly announced freely his discovery to the inhabitants of Tombstone, urging them to file claims close to his.<sup>15</sup> Few seemingly did so and the Tombstone Prospector failed to mention Pearce's find until March 22, a full month after the first claim had been filed, when it casually stated, "A rich gold discovery has been made in the foothills of the Dragoon mountains..."<sup>16</sup>

When the assay results returned, however, the region buzzed with mounting excitement: the Pearce samples had been appraised at \$22,000 a ton in silver (2,100 ounces) and \$5,000 in gold.<sup>17</sup> By comparison, Ed Schieffelin's first Tombstone claim in 1879, "Lucky Cuss," only assayed at \$1,200 to \$1,500 to the ton in gold and \$12,000 to \$15,000 in silver.<sup>18</sup>

According to legend, Tombstone emptied out within four hours of hearing Pearce's assay news. Whether this is true or not, the rush had indeed begun. On March 27th, the Prospector resignedly told its readers, "The PROSPECTOR office is running single handed today, every one having gone to the front.... [H]alf the churches in town have 'no church next Sunday' tacked on the front door."<sup>19</sup>

Two days later, the newspaper announced, "The last stampede for this district went out Tuesday night and early Wednesday morning, the valley near the vicinity of the West Wells resembled the pictures recently published of the rush to Oklahoma. Men on foot and on horseback vied with each other in getting the choicest locations."<sup>20</sup>

Local residents were dazzled by the unbelievable wealth which the Pearce mine promised to deliver. The first shipment of ore, a carload to an El Paso smelter, ran 100 ounces in silver and one ounce in gold.<sup>21</sup> By April 3, two or three carloads of ore had been hauled to Willcox, the nearest railroad point, from there to be refined at an out-of-state refinery, possibly in Deming or El Paso.

At the end of April, there were 15 to 20 men mining in the immediate strike area and many more prospecting in the hills.<sup>22</sup> By now, the Pearces had dug their shaft (No. 1) 10 feet, of which the Prospector declared, "every inch...is in rich ore."<sup>23</sup> Tests on the first carloads revealed the value of the ore to be about \$100 to the ton and for every \$10 of silver there was \$1 of gold.<sup>24</sup>

Other prospectors swiftly staked claims in the vicinity of the Pearce strike. Monuments — piles of stone which marked the boundaries of individual



claims — could be seen for miles extending toward the Chiricahua Mountains.<sup>25</sup> Some of these mines produced profitable ore, such as the “Ruby Silver” whose discovery on March 26, 1895 was virtually ignored by the public but whose gold ore later assayed at \$30 a ton and was incorporated as the Flourine Mining and Milling Company for \$1,500,000.<sup>26</sup> Most claims, however, turned out to be worthless. None proved as rich as the Pearce mine.

Soon after they filed their claims, the Pearces formed a partnership with Richard Kinsman and John Hartery.<sup>27</sup> Most likely, the Pearces needed additional capital to purchase equipment and hire workers (25 for \$3 a day in January, 1896). Kinsman and Hartery may have been Pearce’s sons-in-laws, who, by some accounts, were living in the area.<sup>28</sup>

In any case, the owners continued to work on the mine, sinking the No. 1 shaft down 50 feet on the west end of the ore outcrop and producing a shipment appraised at similar value as the first.<sup>29</sup> On May 13, the *Prospector* reported 25 tons had been shipped from the Pearce mine with another load ready in a few days.<sup>30</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

As optimistic stories of the mine’s wealth spread through the region, it was not long before numerous offers to lease, option or buy the valuable property assailed the Pearces. At least one proposal to purchase the mine for \$15,000 was wisely refused.<sup>31</sup>

In late November or early December of 1895, John Brockman of Silver City, N.M., decided to visit the developing area. A cattle rancher and president of the First National Bank in Silver City, Brockman possessed an acute eye for business ventures he could exploit.<sup>32</sup> After examining the Pearce mine, now with a 150-foot cross cut, Brockman immediately wired his two friends and business associates, Daniel M. Barringer and Richard A.F. Penrose to hasten to the site.

A native of North Carolina, Barringer was a 35-year-old mining engineer and a Philadelphia attorney with extensive knowledge of mining both from an industrial and a legal standpoint.<sup>33</sup> Three years younger than his friend, Penrose was a brother of the well-known Pennsylvanian senator, Boies Penrose, both having descended from an old and well-respected Pennsylvania family. At the time, Penrose, highly regarded in his field, had just recently been promoted to a full professorship in economic geology at the University of Chicago.<sup>34</sup>

Together the three men — Brockman, Barringer and Penrose — with their combined capital, knowledge and experience formed a formidable team of mining investors.<sup>35</sup> Impressed with what they saw, the trio signed a contract with the Pearces for a 90-day bonded option on the property for \$275,000.

Under the agreement, the investors would make a small down payment giving them 90 days in which to decide to purchase the mine for \$275,000. The bond entitled them to develop the property for a set time.

Penrose and Barringer went to Philadelphia to raise the necessary funds. With their collective reputation behind them, the promoters easily obtained assurances of support from friends and associates.

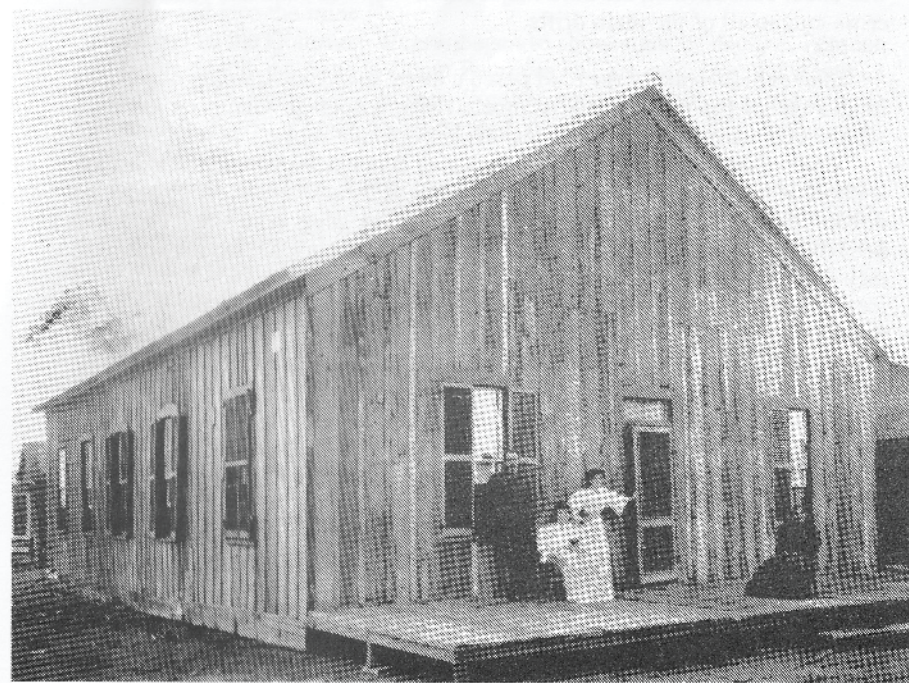
Meanwhile in Arizona, Brockman paid \$500 as a forfeit, giving him seven months to pay the \$275,000. He made back that amount, however, after working the mine for only four months.

As the first payment required by the option, \$50,000 in gold (for the Pearces refused to accept a check) was delivered to the Pearces.<sup>36</sup> The *Geological Society of America Bulletin* reported: “When the gleaming gold was offered, the Pearces exclaimed, ‘We did not know that there was so much money in the world.’ Barringer’s aside comment to Penrose was ‘Dick, we could have gotten this mine much cheaper than we did.’”<sup>37</sup>

In the end, the trio of investors did not wait for their bond agreement to expire. In April, 1896, they proposed to pay the Pearces \$250,000 in cash rather than the original \$275,000 over a period of two years. The final contract included a clause that Ma Pearce would retain a lifetime franchise to run a boarding house in the mining camp, to ensure a secure source of income for the family.<sup>38</sup>

Why would the Pearces sell their claims at all, for a price far below the actual worth of their mine? The *Prospector* explained, “...[N]ot being in a position to erect the necessary machinery to work the mines to the greatest advantage, [the Pearces] have thought it wise to sell.”<sup>39</sup>

The new owners moved quickly to incorporate their property. The official articles of incorporation for the Common-Wealth Mining and Milling Co. were drawn up and filed May 9, 1896, with the county recorder’s office. Penrose was president, Barringer secretary and treasurer, and Brockman general manager of the company.



One of the first boarding houses in Pearce. (Courtesy Arizona Historical Society)



The capital stock of \$2 million was divided into two million shares of one dollar each.<sup>40</sup> Part of this stock was issued in Europe and the corporation's stockholders included such prominent men as the counts Bismark, Pourtales and Tiele of Germany and professors Chamberlin and Salisbury of the University of Chicago.<sup>41</sup>

The company wasted no time in working its property. By late July, over 50 men were hired to work.<sup>42</sup> By late September, 1896, a large general office adjoined an assay office.<sup>43</sup>

In the beginning, equipment consisted of a two-horse winch. As its equipment became more sophisticated, the company sank the No. 1 shaft to water level, a distance of 267 feet. Shaft "A," west of No. 1, also reached water. Later "B" shaft, east of No. 1, eventually intersected the largest ore body found. Within three months after ore shipments began — often up to 100 tons per day — the bond issue was retired and a dividend of \$100,000 a month paid for six months. In 18 months, the mine produced \$1 million in net returns.<sup>44</sup>

In 1898, the company constructed a 60-stamp mill with an initial capacity of 30 tons a day. This eliminated the need to haul crude ore to Cochise for transport to a smelter. The mill's capacity soon increased to 200 tons with the addition of 60 1,000-pound stamps.

Fire destroyed the mill in June of 1900, but a new 80-stamp mill was built soon afterwards and began operation in January, 1901. Even while the mill was under construction, the third major shaft, "C," was sunk and connected by cross-cuts to all of the main drifts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thieves hidden along the road posed a threat to anyone transporting goods in and out of the camp. In November, 1896, a hold-up victim on the road between the camp and Willcox, lost his horse to the robbers as well.

"Pearce is suffering from a mild attack of Blackjaphobia. This disease is peculiar to gold and silver producing regions," commented the Prospector in 1897.<sup>45</sup> Any rumored sighting of the Black Jack gang, who since 1895 had been robbing trains, banks and stores in Arizona and New Mexico, sent Pearce men scurrying for their shot guns.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, Commonwealth's bullion was shipped by Wells, Fargo & Co. to the San Francisco mint and, in order to discourage hold-ups, was cast in heavy 2,000 ounce bars. Similarly, to protect the mine payroll from outlaws, the company enlisted the Norton-Morgan Commercial Co. of Willcox to hide the payroll in its regular freight shipments.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps as an additional safeguard, the owners decided that "no one, not in the employ of the company, is allowed to know anything relative thereto; consequently no estimate can be placed upon the amount or value of the ore shipped."<sup>48</sup>

Because there was no branch railroad in the early days, the ore was hauled by wagon train 18 miles to Cochise where the Southern Pacific Railroad established a station to serve nearby mines. From there, the ore traveled by rail to out-of-state smelters.

Supplies likewise returned in wagons run in trains of four. The Arizona Range News of Willcox, 25 miles north of Pearce, recalled those days in a 1931 commemorative article on Pearce's history: "Tenderfeet always got a thrill watching teams of twenty-four heavy draft horses hauling wagon trains

of three large tanks of fuel oil for the mill boilers."<sup>49</sup>

From about 1897 to 1901, the Common-Wealth mine yielded an estimated \$6 million.<sup>50</sup> Other figures run higher, claiming that Brockman, Penrose and Barringer each made \$1 million per year until 1904.

At a time when silver was selling for 60 cents an ounce,<sup>51</sup> such estimates fail to convey the full value of the Common-Wealth's ore. Mines at Tombstone and Comstock prospered in periods when the market price of silver was at least over a dollar, while the Common-Wealth made its fortune during a period of depressed silver prices.

In May, 1903, a 16-mile portion of the Arizona and Colorado Railroad Co. From Cochise to Pearce was completed. This line eventually was connected to Gleeson and tracks were laid from there toward Naco. But this line was never completed nor was a planned branch to Douglas. In late 1924, Southern Pacific assumed operations of the Cochise-Pearce railroad.

Expected to decrease transport costs by eliminating the large freighting outfits, the railroad arrived just as the fortunes of the Common-Wealth mine began to decline. The company had started processing low-grade ore, having mined most of the high-grade ore above water-level (800 feet).

Pumps with a capacity of four million gallons per day were installed, but water continued to fill the mine. By late 1903, the large stopes<sup>52</sup> had become so heavy the walls were on the point of collapse. Rather than expend effort to fill in the stopes, the owners early in 1904 decided to let the walls cave in and shut down the mine. Ten days later the shaft collapsed and 500,000 tons of waste flowed into the mine.<sup>53</sup>

In 1903 as the Common-Wealth began to show signs of decline, Penrose sold his interest in the mine to Count Pourtales and his associates for less than \$1 million.<sup>54</sup> In 1905, the Common-Wealth company leased the old tailings and mill to David Taylor Swatling and Andrew Young Smith, the mine superintendents.

To extract precious metal from tailings, they employed cyanidation. Introduced in 1899, it involved a complicated process of separating metals from dirt with chemicals.<sup>55</sup> Swatling and Smith constructed a cyanide leaching plant with a capacity of 230 tons per day and employed about 200 men; the Commonwealth never hired as many miners as it did during this period.

In 1906, the lease was extended into the mine, permitting new cross-cuts into the caved-in area and putting the mill to work again.<sup>56</sup> The Tombstone Prospector, however, indicated that work in the mine had begun as early as August, 1905, as it announced optimistically, "Plenty of ore is being found on all the levels.... At the time of the cave in it was reported that the mine had been worked out, but from present appearances there is not much to base the rumor on." The mine's gross output for the 1910 was \$11,073.75 in gold and \$10,355.48 in silver.<sup>57</sup>

On March 23, 1910, the mine suffered a serious setback when fire caused by crossed wires in the engine room destroyed the recently improved mill. Two days later, the Courtland Arizonan lamented:

"The new Common-Wealth mill lies a heap of blackened cinders, twisted iron and ruined machinery, on the very eve of success.... Within five minutes [of the start of the fire] the mill was a spectacular furnace, the red glow being visible for many miles, and was seen by many persons.... Twenty minutes from



the discovery of the fire the skeleton of the big 300 foot building stood sentinel over a mass of twisted ruined wreckage.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the efforts of 50 fire fighters, the blaze caused a conservative estimate of \$160,000 worth of damage, with only \$60,000 insured. Other local mining properties which had depended on the Common-Wealth mill to process their ores began to look elsewhere for a substitute.<sup>59</sup>

On April 4th, the 53-year-old Swatling died "of diabetes."<sup>60</sup> A few months later, the Montana Tonopah Mines Co. bought the Common-Wealth mine and reorganized its company.<sup>61</sup> It installed Charles E. Knox as president, A.Y. Smith as vice-president, F.L. Bryant as secretary and treasurer and Edgar A. Collins — imported with his family from Johannesburg, South Africa — as General Manager.

On Dec. 1, 1911, 10 men started work in the Common-Wealth, the number increasing to 50 by the middle of January. A new, modern mill with a daily capacity of 350 tons began operation in 1913, processing ores with an average assay value of \$5.42 per ton. During its construction, the fourth major shaft, "D," was sunk to the eighth level and connected, like "C" shaft, to all of the main drifts.

Mechanical failures frequently hampered work but the Common-Wealth continued to operate until May, 1917 when the ore was of a quality too poor to be extracted profitably.<sup>62</sup>

"The Old Commonwealth is about to throw up its last and quit," wrote a company official to an associate in Sacramento, Calif.<sup>63</sup> "They have been



The Commonwealth Mining Co. plant in Pearce, perhaps taken after the heavy snowfall of 1916. (Courtesy Enid Howard)

running behind for the past three months and no chance to develop more ore above the water level and no money to go below."

In spite of the official's pessimistic prediction, there was still life in the Common-Wealth mine. In October of 1917, the company granted a lease on the entire mine to A.Y. Smith, who incorporated the Commonwealth Development Co. one month later. The Commonwealth Development Co. previously operated as the Worlds Fair Mine Development with properties in Patagonia.<sup>64</sup>

By May, 1918, there were 50 to 60 employees. The Commonwealth also had a contract with the Copper Queen Mining Co. to process 700 tons of Copper Queen ore per month.<sup>65</sup> From the revival of the mine in 1917 until 1927, 115,000 tons of silicious ore, useful for flux, with an average of 12.5 ounces silver and 0.10 ounces gold per ton were mined and shipped to the smelters at Douglas. Little work was done after 1927.<sup>66</sup>

In July, 1933, the Southern Pacific ceased all its train operations to Pearce, an indication of the deterioration of the situation at the mine as well as in the town itself. For the rest of the decade and into the 1940s, Fred and Thomas F. Cole owned the Commonwealth, working the tailings by the flotation method.<sup>67</sup>

The flotation process, patented in 1898 in the United States by Francis Elmore, used certain oils which adhered to certain minerals, extracting metal from mixed substances such as tailings.<sup>68</sup>

The hopes of the few people left in Pearce clung to the Coles who managed their Pearce property long-distance from Los Angeles.<sup>69</sup> The last mine operated on a small scale until 1940 when the last miners transferred to copper mines after the United States entered World War II.<sup>70</sup>

#### The Growth of a Town

The Common-Wealth mine, of course, did not operate in a vacuum. While the capitalists made their company, others were busy building a community, albeit a mining camp, but a place they could still call home. Miners, store-owners, saloon-keepers, the occasional family — they all converged on land at the foot of a famed hill in the shadow of the rich mine.

At first they thought only to earn some money and then move on when the Common-Wealth could no longer earn its name. The unexpected happened, however, when Pearce began to attract more than footloose prospectors. From different countries, people of different ages, races and cultures came to Pearce to make a living and in the process, they made a town.

To the people of Tombstone and neighboring areas in 1895, it must have seemed as if the settlement created by the Pearce strike arose virtually overnight. Two weeks after the Tombstone Prospector first printed news of the promising discovery, the Sulphur Springs Valley of Willcox announced that the location of the campsite had been fixed<sup>71</sup> northwest at the foot of the hill where James Pearce found his fortune.

For almost a year, the settlement had no definite name; local residents called it "Pearceville." Not until Thomas Chattman became the first postmaster on March 6, 1896 was "Pearce" finally chosen as the permanent name for the town.<sup>72</sup>

At its birth, Pearce was a tent town, inhabited by people so anxious to strike it rich they only had time to erect makeshift abodes of canvas spread over



wooden poles. Soon, however, frame wood houses sprang up<sup>73</sup> and the camp began to acquire a more settled, although not less fervid, atmosphere. By the end of March, 1896, there were 38 finished houses and over a dozen more under construction.<sup>74</sup> Roy English, a long-time resident of the town, remembered those days in an interview in the 1970s:

"Pearce was boomin' and buildin' up, you could hear the saws a buzzin' and the hammers, houses were moved from Tombstone. They just sawed the roofs down, shaped the roofs they was in those days and spliced them together right here, threw some canvas on the walls and the people moved in before it was dry!"<sup>75</sup>

By late July of 1896, about 100 houses stood in Pearce with two or three more going up every week.<sup>76</sup> Adobe homes and wooden frame shops steadily lined the neatly arranged streets.

Business flourished in the camp. By the end of January, 1896, at least four grocery and general merchandise stores opened: J.H. Norton & Company, P.B. Soto & Brother, Huddy & Hazelwood and P.B. Warnekros.<sup>77</sup> Five weeks later, two eating and three boarding houses had appeared.<sup>78</sup> The Common-Wealth company opened a separate boarding house for its workers.<sup>79</sup>

Toward the end of March, flushed with success, the Soto brothers and J.H. Norton moved their respective stores into larger buildings. Three feed yards and stables and a new butcher shop were added to the camp's expanding commercial section. By September, C.H. Snyder was running a busy blacksmith shop employing four mechanics and Quong Kee opened a second Chinese restaurant on Main Street.<sup>80</sup>

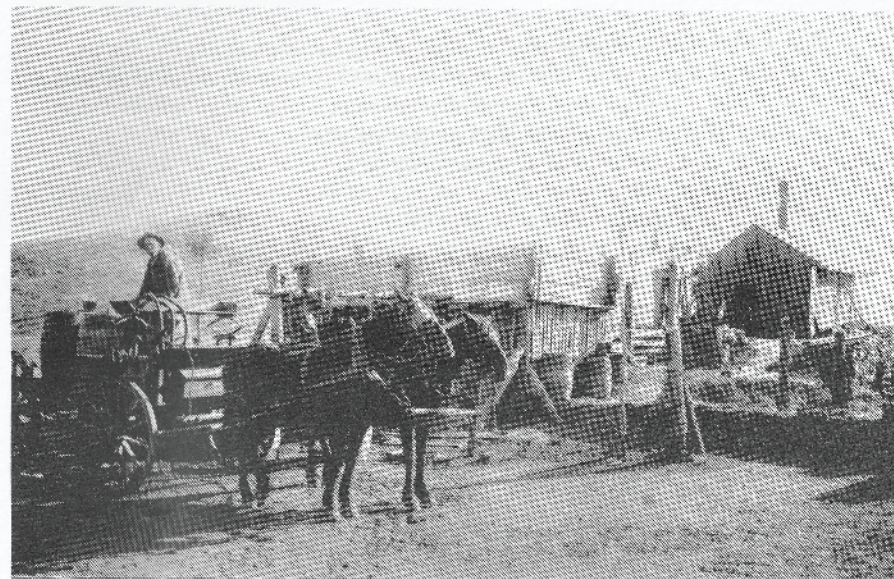
A doctor from Missouri became the first resident physician in December of 1896.<sup>81</sup> A lawyer named Crowley followed and in October of 1897 the Prospector proclaimed the attorney "a success" whose "services are much in demand."<sup>82</sup>

Other individuals supplied services necessary to the camp. By May, 1896, Frank Blatz had established a mail and stage line to Tombstone, connecting the camp with other communities in the region and beyond. The line carried passengers and U.S. mail, making a round trip twice a week between Tombstone and Pearce.<sup>83</sup>

Wood dealers and cutters provided lumber for building construction and mine framing from trees in Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains and other nearby wooded areas. The Common-Wealth used wood as fuel until 1898 when it became one of the first mines in Arizona to utilize petroleum.<sup>84</sup> By 1910, a 33-year-old widowed Mexican woman with seven children whose brother and two lodgers worked as wood cutters was the sole remaining town wood dealer.<sup>85</sup>

Water, on the other hand, remained in demand. At first, it was hauled four miles from the "west well" at 50 cents a barrel. In April, 1896, "Messrs. Newton, Williams, and Harper" sunk a well to water at 250 feet and installed a steam engine to pump the water into a tank with a 5,000-gallon capacity. From there it was drawn to barrels and delivered by wagon to customers at 40 cents a barrel.<sup>86</sup>

James Harper was a 45-year-old Scotsman whose occupation as listed in the 1900 census was "Furnishing water for stock and houses."<sup>87</sup> Into the first decade of the 20th century, the water wagon that he and Owen Williams



**Water wagon owned and operated by Jim Harper and Owen Williams of Pearce. (Courtesy Arizona Historical Society)**

owned and operated was a familiar and welcome sight in the streets of Pearce.<sup>88</sup>

As Pearce continued to grow, it drained life out of Tombstone. Other communities lost people to Pearce, particularly Bisbee,<sup>89</sup> but only Tombstone experienced a mass migration of buildings as well as people. Many buildings, including several large structures, were dismantled and hauled to the new site. G.W. Pittock of Sunset Magazine visited Pearce in 1897 and wrote six years later:

"Every day, for two or three years following the sale of the Pearce mines [to Brockman and associates], wagons loaded with lumber, houses torn apart piece meal and piled up on these vehicles, could be seen on the road heading for the new Mecca. Almost every frame dwelling or store in Tombstone was on wheels ... and the large majority form part of the town of Pearce, some of large proportions."<sup>90</sup>

Among the prominent people who moved to Pearce from Tombstone were P.B. Warnekros, Dan Huddy of Huddy & Hazelwood and Joe Bignon and his wife.

Bignon, especially, represented a group of people commonly associated with the mining boom towns earlier in the 19th century — the enterprising individual who provided or ran places of prostitution, gambling and drinking. Although Pearce was not as rowdy as legend would paint it, the town had its share of disreputable elements.

More than half a century later, Roy English described Bignon, a Canadian-born actor and ballet dancer in his late 30s, as "a little Frenchman about that high, dark hair and dark eyes ... intelligent enough...." His wife Matilda, also known as Minnie, was "educated in London ... [a] very smart woman ... very fine singer and musician and ballet dancer...."<sup>91</sup>



They had settled in Tombstone in 1881, hired as entertainers for the Bird Cage Theater. Later they bought the Bird Cage and business flourished. Billed by her husband as "Big Minnie — six feet tall and 230 pounds of loveliness in pink tights,"<sup>92</sup> Mrs. Bignon not only performed on stage but also acted as a bouncer and occasionally took a turn at prostitution as well.

The couple eventually sold the Bird Cage and bought the Crystal Palace, one of the most luxurious of Tombstone's saloons and gambling houses. When that business began to fade, the Bignons closed the Crystal Palace and followed the crowds to Pearce.<sup>93</sup>

In July, 1895, the Bignons set up a saloon<sup>94</sup> called Joe Bignon's Palace which had no competition in the "wet goods trade" through January, 1896. In March, no longer the only saloon-keeper in camp, Bignon constructed a larger building on the corner of Main and Pearce Streets, with a "handsome, deep cornice of unique design planned around the entire top of his building..."<sup>95</sup> According to western historian C.L. Sonnichsen, the Palace "was the biggest temple of pleasure in the whole booming mining town..."<sup>96</sup>

Matilda Bignon, as she had always done, helped in the saloon. "She had a good heart," recalled Roy English, "she wasn't cold-blooded. Anybody would get sick, ol' Miltilda [sic] would go and do what she could..."<sup>97</sup> Despite her virtues, her husband Joe shot and killed her in 1900, and shortly afterwards married an Irish housekeeper named Ellen, described by English as "much inferior to Miltilda [sic]."<sup>98</sup>

The Bignons were not the only such people nor was the Palace the only such establishment to mine the pockets of the numerous, single men who arrived in Pearce. Estimates vary as to the number of the town's saloons, gambling and prostitution houses (all three were often under the same roof).

One source claims that 12 saloons and 14 brothels existed during the town's heyday,<sup>99</sup> while another adds three "hop joints" (opium dens) to the total.<sup>100</sup> Tucson high school student George L. Mayo's figures of five saloons and four brothels in his study of Pearce are probably closer to the truth.<sup>101</sup>

Contemporary newspapers and personal reminiscences mention seven saloons in addition to the Palace: Bob Brown's, 16 to 1 (Martin & Barrett, proprietors), Pidwell's, Herron & Land's, Wilson's, the Bucket of Blood, and later, Perotti's.<sup>102</sup> The late Grace McCool, a Cochise County historian, also mentioned the Silver Bullion, Gold Queen and Rotgut saloons but they do not appear in contemporary newspapers.<sup>103</sup>

One of the most notorious places was the Bucket of Blood, a small saloon named for the wooden candy bucket splashed with red paint fixed on top of its false front. According to Charles Monmonier, who moved to Pearce as a child in 1896<sup>104</sup>, "a more fitting [sic] name [for the Bucket of Blood] would have been, 'The drop in and crawl out,' for there were more fights in this joint to the square inch than any buze [sic] despenceing [sic] joint in town..."<sup>105</sup>

The saloons catered to the pleasures of not only the miners who lived in the camp but also the cowboys who worked in the valley. Although most cowboys did not live in the camp itself (the 1900 census for Pearce lists only nine cowboys or cattle-herders),<sup>106</sup> they evidently regarded Pearce as a place for socializing, where they could buy drinks and seek entertainment before returning to their outfits.

Many townspeople did not look forward to their visits. In his written reminiscences, Charles Monmonier related an incident of these early years illustrating the hazards of crossing the cowboys:

"[O]ne evening about sundown a couple of Wild Cowboy[s] ... had been drinking and making a day of it and began [sic] to get kind of salty and was approached by the town officier [sic] and told that they had a choice to make, I.E., go to jail, or get out of town. [T]hey chose the later [latter] and started up the main street of the camp ... and to vent their disappointment in the turn of avents [sic], pulled their sixshooters out and with a wild Comanchi [sic] yell and slaping [sic] ... their horses both tore up the street, shooting or firing [sic], first on one side and on the other as they rode."<sup>107</sup>

In an interview with E.F. Schaff, Monmonier remarked, "When those people come in there — cowboys and so on — well, that street you better not stay on it."<sup>108</sup>

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Determining the actual composition of the population that first settled Pearce requires more data than we currently possess. The first census to include the camp was not taken until 1900. In the five years between its founding and the 1900 census, the characteristics of the camp population could have changed drastically. For example, Tombstone's population increased by several thousand in just three years, from 1879 to 1881.

It seems probable, though, given the nearby origin of many of Pearce's first migrants — mostly men from Tombstone, Bisbee and other regional settlements — that the early camp population resembled the pattern established during the previous half century in western boom towns, that is, large numbers of single males constantly moving from place to place looking for jobs.

County voting registers, gathered every two years, are not a definitive source of data on population because they only included adult males (until Arizona granted women suffrage rights in 1912) who voluntarily registered themselves. Nonetheless, they provide a glimpse of one segment of Pearce's citizens — its voters — during the last years of the 19th century.

The mean average age of the registered voters was 40.5 years. In 1902, about the peak of the Common-Wealth's production during its 40 years of active life, 133 men registered as voters. Two years later — after the mine's first cave-in — half that number, 67, appeared in the records. The number of registrants continued to decline until 1910, the last year of voting records studied for this paper, when only 45 men registered. Not surprisingly, the percentage of U.S.-born registrants remained consistently high, reaching its apogee in 1908 when 87.5 percent of registered voters were American-born.

The county voting registers provide a limited view of a part of the camp's total population. A fuller picture of Pearce during its first decade is provided by the Twelfth Census of the United States. Four hundred and eighty-nine people lived either in the town or its immediate vicinity; 66 percent were males and 34 percent female.

Pearce's imbalanced sex ratio differs little from that in the Comstock's urban settlements during the silver boom. In Virginia City, Nev., in 1870, shortly before the Comstock's peak in production, women constituted roughly 33 percent of the population.<sup>109</sup>

In Pearce, almost half of its females 16 years and over were listed as single.



Slightly over a third were married and living with their spouses; the rest were married but not living with their spouses (5%), widowed (6%), or divorced (0.6%). Children made up a large proportion of the total population, almost 28 percent being under 16 years of age.

The majority of Pearce residents were born in the United States. Over 72 percent (72.2%) of the population were natives representing 33 states and territories with Arizona at the top of the list of places of origin, followed by Texas, New Mexico, California and Ohio in descending order.

The 136 foreign-born comprised 27.8 percent of the total population and represented 14 foreign countries with Mexico at the head of the list, followed in descending order by England, China, Italy tied with Scotland and Germany.<sup>110</sup>

Males, by far, dominated the paid workforce of Pearce, making up approximately 93 percent of all people listed with jobs. More than three-quarters (76.7%) of the male population worked. Considering that the figure includes infants and children, it seems safe to infer that unemployed adult men were rare. Men came to Pearce to find work and if there were no openings, they wandered elsewhere in search of wages.

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Not all men, however, came to Pearce to look for lawful occupations. Robbers waited for chances to strike at the mine shipments leaving camp daily, as well as at other lucrative opportunities in the camp itself. While the Common-Wealth tried to protect its cargoes from hold-ups by casting extra-heavy bullion bars and hiding payroll money in other business wagons, Pearce store-keepers simply stayed alert for signs of possible danger.

In 1897, Pablo B. Soto sent a warning note to his Pearce branch manager, Thomas Chattman, "I think it advisable that you keep very little money in the safe. The Old Black Jack gang is reported again in the country and we had better be prepared for them."<sup>111</sup> In October of the same year, thieves broke into the works of the Gold Cliff Mining Co. and left with \$1,000 worth of equipment during the night.<sup>112</sup>

The Burt-Alvord-Stiles gang reportedly planned its crimes — robbing trains, stealing horses and rustling cattle — in Pearce.<sup>113</sup> Although most people in Pearce knew the men used the camp's iron-padlocked, two-cell jail-house as their meeting place,<sup>114</sup> townspeople hesitated to report the gang's activities to authorities, knowing that Alvord was the deputy sheriff at Willcox. To their dubious credit, the three men plus Bill Downing, a Pearce constable, pulled off the last successful train robbery in Arizona when they stopped and looted a Southern Pacific train of over \$60,000 in gold coins at the Cochise train station on Sept. 9, 1899.<sup>115</sup>

Pearce experienced other troubles besides robbery. In November, 1898, the night watchman fatally shot an engineer at the Common-Wealth mill. Both pulled guns in the middle of a dispute over a trivial matter begun several days prior to the shooting.<sup>116</sup> Murder was rare, however.

Sometimes trouble occurred when idle men found ways to amuse themselves. On one occasion before 1900, some of the town's gamblers decided to liven up their day by tying 50 feet of mine fuse around the long-haired dog belonging to John Brockman. They lit the fuse and watched the dog head straight for home.

"The ... laughter yelling and the burning hot tar from the fuse gave the Dog the speed, and sight similer [sic] to Haley's Comet," recalled Charles Monmonier.

The town marshall arrested one of the schemers and the judge fined him \$25 and released him. The dog, on the other hand, lost most of his hair but was otherwise unhurt.<sup>117</sup>

Most often, Pearce law officers faced drunken men raising a ruckus. Monmonier related an street incident involving a drunk, "big burly Mexican," a wood-cutter who started cursing and waving a sharp table knife with a point like a dagger; people hid indoors and waited for help. The deputy officer, Billy Stiles (of the Burt-Alvord-Stiles gang), eventually disarmed the man and brought him to the town judge who promptly fined him \$25 and released him.<sup>118</sup>

Pearce's peace officers themselves sometimes provoked disturbances. In addition to Stiles, Alvord and Downing, the camp hired other questionable characters to uphold the law. Constable Chris Robinson was shot during a poker game at the Bucket of Blood saloon and "Big-Nosed Kate" shot her husband, marshall Robert Answorth, for visiting the local brothels.<sup>119</sup>

In spite of its occasional outbursts of sensational violence, Pearce never achieved the notoriety of Tombstone; Deadwood, S.D.; or Dodge City, Kan. The first person to die in Pearce in September, 1896 was neither an outlaw or drunk but the child of a mine employee.<sup>120</sup> When Deputy Sheriff Burt Alvord arrived in camp in November, 1896, the only people who fled were eligible jurors trying to escape court duty.<sup>121</sup>

Historian C.L. Sonnichsen, in fact, credits Alvord for cleaning up the streets of Pearce "where the spirit of homicide was becoming domesticated." According to Sonnichsen, the citizens of Willcox were so impressed with Alvord's success in Pearce that they hired him for their own town. Perhaps they thought his celebrated skill with the pistol and experience working with the famous lawman John Slaughter compensated for his dishonest reputation.<sup>122</sup>

Other developments helped eradicate or at least diminish the visibility of Pearce's tenderloin district. Sonnichsen believed that Brockman, "who wanted to clean up the town," played a primary role by disapproving of the houses of pleasure thus discouraging miners, who feared for their jobs, from patronizing them.<sup>123</sup>

Another explanation is that changes in mine management engendered a more systematic policy of hiring which favored men with families who were less mobile and more controllable from an employer's standpoint. Such men were less inclined to drift toward the "bad" side of town.

Although miners constituted only a portion of Pearce's total population, they formed probably the most important because mines, particularly the Common-Wealth, played a central role in the development of the town's economy. The 89 miners in the 1900 census composed the largest segment of the total paid workforce (18.2%). Mining continued to be a major source of jobs in the town almost until the end, employing 53 men (7.5% of the total paid workforce) in 1910 and 90 men (14.9%) in 1920.<sup>124</sup>

Although little evidence exists documenting the marital status of miners before 1900, the percentage of miners with families consistently increases over



the 20-year period from 1900 to 1920. Over 36 percent of the miners listed in the 1900 census were married or widowed with children.<sup>125</sup>

At the Comstock towns, by comparison, 36 percent of the miners at the height of mine production lived with women (presumably most were wives but not all).<sup>126</sup> By October, 1901, most of the 125 men who worked at the Common-Wealth were married and owned their own homes in Pearce.<sup>127</sup> In 1910, over 47 percent of the miners in the census were married.<sup>128</sup> In 1920, almost 58 percent of the mine laborers recorded by the census were married.<sup>129</sup>

Such men came to Pearce for work in order to support their wives, children and, sometimes, extended families. While married miners could very well have patronized saloons and brothels, they had less money to spend on such diversions unless they were willing to let their families go hungry and ragged.

Furthermore, the frontier tenderloin district tended to prosper most in settlements where men far outnumbered women, creating a market for commercial sex as well as frequently associated enterprises such as liquor sales and dancing shows. Marion Goldman, in her study of Comstock prostitutes, concluded, "The single most important variable making prostitution central to social organization on the Comstock was the overwhelming ratio of men to women."<sup>130</sup>

As Pearce attracted more men accompanied by families, the disreputable sector's base of customers began to dwindle. By contrast, the tenderloin districts at the Comstock and in Tombstone continued to flourish, with fluctuating cycles of business, until the end of the mining boom in the respective settlements.

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Overall, Pearce, unlike the Comstock's twin cities of Gold Hill and Virginia City or Arizona's Tombstone, did not appear to be a traditional western boom town. One Pearce correspondent for the *Prospector*, in fact, disclaimed his town's first image as a rough mining boom camp.

"We are not of the boom element, but we glide along smoothly ...." he wrote in March, 1896.<sup>131</sup>

Pearce never seemed to "boom" so much as grow steadily, encouraged by the lure of inexpensive building lots. Those interested in settling down could acquire resident lots for free, owing to the generosity of Joe Bignon and Brannock Riggs. They had anticipated the creation of a settlement by the mine and purchased plats of land which they donated "to those who will agree to build on them but no lots will be given to any one for speculation."<sup>132</sup>

Bignon had taken advantage of the 1862 Homestead Act to secure 160 acres by the minesite, having promised to develop the land for a stipulated number of years, a contract consummated and recorded on July 17, 1901.<sup>133</sup> Thereafter, he owned a large section of the town, known as the Bignon Tract. Much of it remained in his possession until his death in 1926.<sup>134</sup>

There is no apparent explanation for the actions of Bignon and Riggs and philanthropic motives seem unlikely. Riggs lived on a ranch near Pearce; both he and Bignon had much at stake in the fortunes of Pearce. A flourishing town provided Riggs with a nearby center in which to conduct business and Bignon with patrons for his saloon. Both men were relatively well-off and could afford to take a direct role in stimulating the growth of the town as a business investment.

After the townsite was established and lots opened for sale, order characterized the physical growth of the camp. Thomas Fulgum, who arrived from Willcox late in the spring of 1895, platted the town methodically soon after his arrival in the camp. The *Prospector* wrote in March, 1896:

"All of the streets are 100 feet wide, with alleys running through the center of the blocks which are 40 feet wide. Thus it will be seen that every person will have a back entrance to his home without trespassing on his neighbor's ground. The lots ... are generally supposed to be 25 feet wide by 150 feet in depth, though a person in selecting ground can take as many feet as is wanted."<sup>135</sup>

Fulgum's gridiron plan for Pearce adhered to the design typical of western settlements. A gridiron layout, "with straight streets intersecting at right angles [which] form rectangular blocks," looked orderly and was easy to design and survey.

Once Fulgum designed the town's layout, purchasers quickly claimed the lots. "On the main street and in the two main blocks of the town, the lots have all been taken and the business portion ... is already permanently established," reported the *Prospector*. Other structures followed the businesses.

In September, 1896, a subscription circulated around camp to raise money for construction of a schoolhouse. Estimated to cost between \$400 and \$500, construction began in late September, 1896.<sup>136</sup> A year later, school opened with one female teacher and over 50 students in attendance.<sup>137</sup>

Besides holding classes, the schoolhouse also served as the site of Sunday worship services. By the early winter of 1897, visiting Protestant clergymen presided over well-attended services every week. At the same time, some Pearce citizens established a Sunday school, graced by a new organ purchased with money raised through subscription.<sup>138</sup> Religion received another boost in February, 1898, when the leading businesses of the camp agreed to close their stores at noon on Sundays.<sup>139</sup>



Panoramic view of Pearce in the 1890s. (Courtesy Arizona Historical Society)



By establishing schools, churches, clubs, fraternal organizations and civic activities and recreation, people indicated they wanted more than a temporary work-stop. They did not want to live like the immigrant laborers laying track across the Territory, settling for the hastily thrown-up railroad shanty-towns which disappeared as quickly as they had arisen when the work crews moved on to the next location.<sup>140</sup> People in Pearce wanted to form a community and create a home for themselves and their families.

Other types of organized activities followed public education and religious worship. Masonic lodges early on established themselves in Pearce. The Knights of Pythias and other lodges used the upper floor of Pidwell's saloon as a lodge room before it burned down in 1904.<sup>141</sup> Many of Pearce's most prominent men, including Judge William Monmonier and A.Y. Smith were Masons.<sup>142</sup>

From time to time, individuals also organized dances to celebrate private occasions such as the opening of a new restaurant or to honor a favored visitor.<sup>143</sup> In December, 1896, the young people of the town formed a "Social and Dancing Club," with an initial roster of 30 members, to "fill the dearth of amusements."<sup>144</sup>

Public holidays became opportunities to hold more extravagant celebrations as a community. For Thanksgiving in 1896, a number of Pearce citizens planned a ball in the schoolhouse with dancing music provided by a Mexican band from Fairbank. Neighboring communities were also invited to attend.<sup>145</sup>

Eight months later, the town jubilantly commemorated the Fourth of July. It hosted the day's festivities for the area, including Tombstone over 20 miles away. Beginning early in the morning, throngs of people, arriving by carriage and horseback, crowded the Pearce grounds set apart for the holiday activities which included a steer tying contest and a baseball game (which Pearce won 26-16).<sup>146</sup>

Sometimes, a common political or economic cause prompted people to organize themselves into a group. In September, 1896, the upper-level managers of the Commonwealth formed the Bryan Club to support the Democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan, in his bid for the presidency. Bryan, unlike his Republican opponent, William McKinley, advocated the unlimited coinage of silver, which was potentially a great boon for silver mines such as the Commonwealth.<sup>147</sup>

Although membership in the club was apparently open to everyone, only the mine managers occupied leadership positions. The club accepted all men, regardless of their political affiliation, as long as they wanted to "help along the cause of Silver."<sup>148</sup>

Townpeople recognized the particular significance of the election results for their community. Men wagered with each other on who would be the winner and several showed off new hats after election day. One young woman, promised two new silk dresses if Bryan won but only one if McKinley won, considered herself a loser when the latter triumphed at the polls.<sup>149</sup>

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The Bryan Club and general heightened interest in the 1896 elections demonstrate that behind the flurry of social organizations, the role of miners and mining remained central to the development of the community in Pearce. Mining, and the Commonwealth in particular, maintained a strong influence

on town affairs even when it was not producing much ore.

Problems at the mine concerned most townspeople because they realized that the livelihood of their community depended upon the production of the mine. In the early years there was much that could have worried people, in part because of certain inherent characteristics of mining as an occupation and in part because of specific actions of the miners themselves.

Working at the Common-Wealth, as at underground mines throughout the West, was dangerous. Regional newspapers periodically printed accounts of accidents occurring at the mine. A defective brake caused a freight wagon to roll away loose on the hill, killing a horse and maiming several others.<sup>150</sup> A young, inexperienced miner was caught coming up in the cage, broke his arm and lacerated his scalp.<sup>151</sup> More than 15 years later, a member of the repair gang was fatally electrocuted when he stumbled into a switch controlling one of the mill motors.<sup>152</sup>

Mining is by nature an unstable occupation, often affected by unpredictable weather and market forces. In February, 1898, the Common-Wealth laid off 30 men after three days of rain turned the roads into a muddy mess, making it impossible to transport ore to the railroad. Without a means to transport the ore, the ore bins filled and further mining was deemed unwise. Rather than continue to keep the idle workers on the payroll, the managers decided to fire them.<sup>153</sup>

Although the lay-off was expected to last only a few days, the fact of its occurrence — repeated periodically in Pearce — underscores the lack of job security for miners, a condition existing throughout the active life of the Common-Wealth. For example, of the 79 men listed in the 1900 census as mine employees, only four (5 percent of 79) appeared in the census 10 years later, and one of the four (1.3 percent of 79) appeared in the 1920 census.

The crude persistence rate from 1910 to 1920 would improve over that from 1900 to 1910. Of the 40 mine employees in 1910, four (10% of 40) remained until at least 1920.<sup>154</sup> Nonetheless, these crude persistence rates suggest the high turnover occurring in the labor force at the mines.

Faced with the hazards and uncertainties of their occupation, the Common-Wealth miners, the same as miners throughout the West, actively sought to improve their wages and working conditions. In November, 1896, 50 to 60 teamsters who hauled about 70 tons of ore every day from the mine to the Cochise railroad station quit work. Paid \$2.75 per ton of ore hauled, the striking teamsters wanted a pay raise.<sup>155</sup> The outcome of the strike is uncertain but it was not the last strike.

A much more significant strike occurred in October, 1901, when the miners tried to organize a union "to care for the sick, furnish a library, recreation hall, etc." Brockman, in response, offered on behalf of the company to provide all the services the miners thought necessary rather than permit the formation of a union. "The stamps would be hung up until consumed by rust before [the] Company would allow a union man to work in the Commonwealth mine," he said.

The men refused their superintendent's offer and the mine and mill were shut down. Without a job, many of the single men left the camp while the married men continued to hope for a resolution of the conflict in their favor.<sup>156</sup>

The miners must have been surprised at the vehemence with which their



attempt to organize had been met by the management. Even the Prospector protested that "the formation of a union would work as little injury to the company as would the formation of one of the numerous beneficiary lodges."<sup>157</sup> The absence of any further reference to a miner's union in contemporary or secondary sources suggests a management victory over unionism in Pearce.

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Mining could bring people together into a town and assume a central role in its development, but it did not necessarily unite the community into one cohesive body of people living together in peace and good will. Racial minorities, for example, had a marginal place within the community. Often, they simply formed sub-communities of their own, nominally encompassed within but not really incorporated into the larger community of the town.

A lack of data precludes any definitive conclusion on the treatment of racial minorities by the largely European and Anglo-American population of Pearce. Extant evidence, however, generally suggests that whites hesitantly and uneasily accepted as part of their community those of different skin-color and race.

In Arizona, Mexicans formed a substantial population, particularly in the southern regions including Pearce. A substantial number of Mexicans lived in Pearce for much of its active existence. Counting only households headed by Mexicans, whether male or female, Mexicans constituted 11.7 percent of the total population in 1900, 26.8 percent in 1910 and 50.2 percent in 1920.<sup>158</sup>

According to the Geological Society of American Bulletin in 1933, Brockman was made manager of the Common-Wealth primarily because he had previously lived in Mexico and at the Pearce mine, "nearly all the miners were Mexicans from across the border."<sup>159</sup> Following the common western practice of pay differentiation, the Commonwealth in 1912 — the only year for which such records have been uncovered for this research — paid Mexicans \$2 and Anglos \$2.50 per day.<sup>160</sup>

Jobs for Mexicans remained largely restricted to manual labor. In 1900, 20 of the 27 individuals listed with occupations were either day laborers or teamsters. Mexicans worked in a wider variety of jobs in 1910, including a barber who owned his own shop, saloon porter, dressmaker and delivery wagon driver.

Nonetheless, the majority (48 out of 66 working individuals) were miners (19 individuals) or laborers working at the mills, railroad, or independent. In 1920, 83 of 89 working Mexicans delivered goods or labored in the mines, mills, railroad and public roads. In all three censuses, a few Mexican women worked as domestic servants, launderers and keepers of boarding houses.<sup>161</sup>

Segregation from the whites seemed to mark the daily life of Pearce's Hispanics, creating a sense of solidarity among them. Mexicans lived segregated in the northern part of the town.<sup>162</sup> Not only did their men play on a separate baseball team from the whites, their children attended a school separate from that for white children.<sup>163</sup>

During a confrontation between a Mexican miner and a white deputy in a saloon, the bartender had his hands full keeping the other Mexicans in the room from joining the fight. Apparently, the bartender was acutely aware of the inclination of the men to help out a fellow Mexican, even in an affair in

which they had no personal stake.<sup>164</sup>

Yet it would be misleading to assume that separation between Mexicans and whites characterized every aspect of their relations. In a letter to Charles Monmonier in 1914 discussing his father's role as Justice of the Peace, a Mexican woman who had lived in Pearce as a youth wrote warmly:

"Mr. Monmoner [sic] told my father he couldn't marrie [sic] me because I was only 16 years old and was necessary to ask for a license from the county seat in Tombstone, and they change my name to 17 years instead. And he married me in our own house [in January, 1916] wishing me good luck."

The woman also relates how her father had bought a house in Pearce, indicating that Mexicans purchased property and perhaps planned to settle permanently in town.<sup>165</sup> Beyond the rules of segregated residential quarters, schools and recreation, individuals often interacted as neighbors regardless of race. Dick Shaw, another Pearce resident as a youth, recalled a fire in the town:

"One afternoon the fire whistle blew and school let out to see the excitement. The fire was next door to my 'casa,' a Mexican family's home.... I got on my roof to keep the roof cool and the other boys kept the wall cool.... the fire was soon out...."

The family easily found another empty house, "but since they had lost everything, donations of food, dishes, utensils, bedding, furniture and clothes appeared rather miraculously and by supper time they were about as well off as before. I think it turned out to be the best kind of insurance."<sup>166</sup>

For the townspeople who helped this family, these Mexicans were as much a part of the community as themselves and deserving of the same aid they would hope to receive from others in similar circumstances.

Compared to the Hispanics, the Chinese were late-comers to the American West. They began coming by the thousands in the 1850s and were among those who came to Pearce in the late 1890s. Almost all of the arrivals were male; only 10 Chinese women ever officially lived in Arizona territory<sup>167</sup> and there were none in Pearce.

Discrimination against Chinese was common. One of the major goals of the 19th-century mine labor movement, was to keep the Chinese out of the mines because they were willing to work for low wages, undermining union wage standards. An unwritten law in Bisbee forbade Chinese to own businesses or even stay the night within city limits.<sup>168</sup>

In Pearce, hostility toward the Chinese who came to town appeared to be minimal. Quong Kee's two restaurants in 1896 is one example of a flourishing business owned and run by individual Chinese. According to the reminiscences of Charles Monmonier, Quong Kee had come from Willcox and opened his first eating place in Pearce in partnership with a Bill Busenbark:

"[G]ive him [Quong Kee] an old store, some pots and pans and an old table and any kind of an old shak [sic] and he would soon have the aroma of Cabbage and the ham ... spreading its inviteing [sic] gesture through all the cracks and crevices and the pounding of the steel triangle would soon be announcing [sic] to the whole wide world to come out and get it."

Quong gave free meals to hungry and broke miners and consequently never became rich although business thrived. After he opened his second restaurant, several more Chinese arrived, including two of Quong's cousins. One of them,



"California Joe," visited saloons at night to sell to gamblers and other patrons sandwiches and pies he carried in a large basket.<sup>169</sup>

There is no record of formal segregation of the Chinese as there is of the Mexicans but a couple of factors may explain the absence. One, there is no indication the Chinese ever attempted to compete for mining jobs, thus relieving a source of racial tension common in other towns where mining companies tried to hire Chinese laborers. The three censuses from 1900 to 1920 record a total of 24 Chinese and none of them had occupations associated with mining. They worked as restaurant cooks, waiters, launderers and general laborers.

Second, the number of Chinese in town was small compared to the numbers of Mexicans. In 1900, there were 18 native Chinese, plus two who were born in the United States, residing in Pearce; ten years later, there were three native Chinese; in 1920, the census shows just one Chinese in town.<sup>170</sup> The reason behind this progressive decrease may be because they were all males without immediate families to support. They probably simply moved on to other locations once business declined after the Common-Wealth faltered in 1904.

Information on blacks in Pearce is scanty and contemporary newspapers rarely mention them at all. There were seven blacks living in Pearce at the time of the 1900 census. One man kept a lodging house (boarding house). One woman worked as a housekeeper in a lodging home. Another woman, who had a young daughter and son, ran a lodging home, apparently separate from that of the man; at the time of the census she had two female black boarders with no occupations listed for them.<sup>171</sup>

Neither the 1910 nor 1920 census records any blacks in Pearce. The small number of blacks in town does not appear to be unusual for a western mining community. By comparison, Comstock never had more than 100 blacks, even during its period of peak population of almost 25,000.<sup>172</sup>

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Despite their various living conditions and jobs, Mexicans, Chinese, blacks and whites came to Pearce because they were drawn by the opportunities to make a living created by mining. The mines, principally but not exclusively the Common-Wealth, attracted laborers to extract the ore and subsequently spawned a multitude of service industries, such as restaurants, laundries, saloons and boarding houses.

This was the origin of the town, a story repeated countless in years past throughout the West. With its initial years of ceaseless mine production, rapid expansion of area and growth in population, proliferation of a seedy district and criminal characters, Pearce appears similar to mining towns before it — Virginia City on the Comstock, Deadwood in South Dakota and Tombstone.

But in many other ways, as it entered the 20th century, Pearce demonstrated that it was very different from mining towns of even a generation before. It also reflected the changing character of American society at large.

The conflict over unionism in 1901 was one sign that Pearce was moving out of the 19th century when independent prospectors and capitalists, outlaws and saloon-keepers could dominate the life of a western frontier town. At the start of the new century, unions, huge corporations and heavy industrialization

had already displaced most of the independent prospectors and small-scale capitalists.

By the time Pearce appeared, impersonal entities such as the corporation had largely eroded the importance of the individual in development of western industrial settlements. The company-employed miner replaced the roaming prospector while the incorporated conglomerate engulfed the single, private investor; the temperance movement threatened the business of the saloon-keeper even as anti-gambling legislation sought to eliminate the games.

The changes did not occur immediately or simultaneously but by the opening of the 20th century, they defined the way of life in a western mining town. The bearded prospector, the kind-hearted prostitute and ruthless gunfighter all belonged to legend, symbols of the way people romantically thought life used to be in a frontier camp.

Along with the changes in the mining industry, technological advances began to alter the lives of Pearce's ordinary residents. In 1907, the Adams Telephone Co. installed lines for Cochise and Willcox with diverging lines to ranches and communities along the way, including Pearce.<sup>173</sup> By 1910, the town had its own central telephone office and a single operator, both housed in the former building of the Pearce Mercantile Company.<sup>174</sup> At first, it cost \$25 to subscribe to the phone service but thereafter it was free, maintained by certain men of the community as a public service.<sup>175</sup>

In early 1912, possibly even earlier, the Commonwealth company started selling the water from its mines to town residents; pipes were finally put in many houses.<sup>176</sup> The census of 1910 shows Pearce had a plumber with his own shop by May of that year.

Automobiles appeared on the unpaved streets and roads. Driving then seems to have been a particularly hazardous activity.

Dick Shaw recalled his first experience with a car: "... Mother bought a Model T Ford. On a Saturday afternoon Phil Rockfellow drove it into our yard and said, 'Here it is, you drive it.' That was my first driving lesson."<sup>177</sup>

Charles Monmonier, in a letter to his brother in 1915, viewed driving pessimistically, "But my opinion is that as long as people has wheels under them and power to spin around over the ground, they will kill themselves."<sup>178</sup>

Although influences of an increasingly urbanized American society penetrated Pearce with telephones, water pipelines and automobiles, the town remained largely rural and subject to the same vulnerabilities and backwardness that always plague rural communities.

For example, Pearce had little defense against destructive fires. On April 23, 1904, a fire spread rapidly along Main Street and consumed \$10,000 worth of property, including the Palace saloon and Star restaurant. As in the case of the disastrous mill fire in 1910, very little of the Main Street property was insured.<sup>179</sup>

While advances in technology altered the daily lives of people in Pearce, the people themselves altered the character of the town. The 1900 census listed no farmers, but the census 10 years later shows 96 farmers with homesteads around Pearce, surpassing miners (53 listed) as the largest occupational group (33.3 percent farming versus 18.4 percent mining of the total adult workforce).

The number of railroad laborers, similarly, increased in the first decade of the century, from one in 1900 to 28 in 1910. The number of teachers also



increased, from two to eight, indicating the growth of Pearce's schools.

The zero to nine-year-old age cohort showed a dramatic increase from 89 individuals in 1900 to 199 in 1910, becoming the largest segment of the population by age. Likewise, those aged 10 to 19 increased from 74 to 133 during the decade. This surge in the number of children lowered the mean average age in town from 24 to 22 for females and 29 to 27 for males.

A total of 706 people lived in Pearce in 1910, an increase of 217 since the last census. While this reveals nothing about fluctuations in population that occurred over the 10-year span between official counts, it does suggest that Pearce experienced internal growth, fuelled by the boom in agriculture in the valley.

The sex ratio began to even out, with the 308 females making up 43.6 percent of the total population in 1910 instead of 34.2 percent in 1900. Females in 1910 were also slightly more educated than those 10 years earlier, as the percentage of those able to read and write rose five percent to 68.2 percent of all females.

There were more married people in 1910, and proportionately fewer single, widowed and divorced people than in 1900. The number of boarding house-keepers decreased to two from nine in 1900, evidence that the need for this service — a convenient and affordable form of housing for single people — declined considerably over the decade.

A proportionately larger percentage of the population was not employed but this is partly explained by the increase in children since 1900. Overall, the immigrant population decreased both in absolute numbers and in the proportion of total population between 1900 and 1910. It is likely that immigrants left Pearce before 1910 during the lull in operations at the Commonwealth as its ownership was transferred to the Montana-Tonopah Company.

Thus as it entered the second decade of the 20th century, Pearce had already undergone several transformations. The economy was diversifying and mining, once the sole reason for the town's existence and major source of jobs, was being challenged by agriculture for pre-eminent standing as a vital industry. The town itself had gained a more settled air with an increasing number of families and children. In the spring of 1910, there were three schoolrooms with a total of 95 students.<sup>180</sup>

Responding to these changes, the town's business section began to orient itself toward families. The Courtland Arizonan in 1910 reported that Mrs. R.R. Smith had opened the Home Style Restaurant where patrons could order a "wholesome meal served family style," complete with ice cream and cold drinks. During the same year, the New Pearce Cafe — long anticipated by the town's bachelors and married couples — promised to serve delicacies ranging from fish and oysters to steak, as well as more regular fare such as poultry, vegetables, sandwiches and drinks.

Dan Huddy purchased an old dance hall in Tombstone and moved it to Pearce. Renovation included a stage and a maple floor at least 40 by 60 feet to give ample room for dancing.<sup>181</sup> Huddy Hall quickly became the social center of town, hosting numerous dances, plays and other social events for the next 20 years. One dance in June, 1910 attracted 200 people, many from valley settlements.<sup>182</sup> By 1914, Joe Bignon had replaced his Palace with the Idle Hour Theatre, Pearce's first moving picture showplace.<sup>183</sup>

Likewise, social organizations abounded to satisfy the various interests within the population. Social events and organizations implicitly created and nurtured a sense of community. By 1912, the author of an article about Pearce in the Courtland Arizonan, felt justified in writing, "It has been common, in speaking of the friendly feeling that has existed in Pearce for years, to say that the camp was as if all were members of one family...."<sup>184</sup>

By April, 1910, a number of golfers had formed a golf club in Pearce. The socially elite golfers also had the opportunity to join the Douglas Golf Club.<sup>185</sup>

In the fall of 1912, a number of people from around the valley met in Huddy Hall to form The Cochise County Fair Association, an agricultural society which would hold an annual fair at Pearce.<sup>186</sup>

The Pearce Home Guard, formed in 1912 to practice riflery and other defense activities, had 125 members during its unspecified peak period. In 1916, it was absorbed by the Rifle Club, the local branch of the National Rifle Association, but retained a separate name.<sup>187</sup>

The Knights of Pythias, Valley Lodge No. 21 in Pearce, sponsored popular dances at Huddy Hall. Their Golden Anniversary Ball in 1914 hosted more than 100 couples from Tucson, Douglas, Bisbee, Tombstone, Courtland and Gleeson as well as Pearce itself.<sup>188</sup>

Every year, the chautauqua came to town and offered academic lectures, poetry readings, music recitals and other events for the pleasure of the townspeople — all for a price, of course.<sup>189</sup>

For those with musical tastes, a group of about 25 individuals formed the Commonwealth Band in 1915; they solicited funds for uniforms and music and planned to tour the state, representing their town.<sup>190</sup>

Recreation also became occasions of community building, as friends and associates met informally to enjoy the valley's natural beauty and abundance of wildlife. As early as 1896, the Sulphur Valley News reported Pearce residents hunting in the surrounding regions.<sup>191</sup>

People also picnicked and went on family outings in the valley. Even those unimpressed with the valley's natural offerings sometimes discovered something about the outdoors to tell others. In a letter to an associate, Frank L. Bryant of the Commonwealth company wrote,

"There is not much to write about Arizona, except wind, sun and sand, all of which combine to make Tarantual [sic] and Scorpion the finess [sic] specimen the United States can show, we caught a half grown centipede a few days ago that measured six inches, not so bad for a baby 'bird'?"<sup>192</sup>

From its beginnings as a rapidly expanding mining camp, Pearce settled into a slower growing adulthood. Although it did not increase much in size, it matured in a different way. It lost much of its luster as a mining town but assumed a new role as business and agricultural center.

A generation of children had grown up in Pearce. In 1914, six students represented Pearce at the University of Arizona in Tucson, matching the numbers sent by the much larger cities of Bisbee and Douglas. Alice Lawson, the daughter of a Pearce physician, was one of those six students. A member of the university literary club and basketball team, she graduated in 1914 after four years specializing in botany.<sup>193</sup>

For Alice Lawson and her peers who had come out of Pearce to attend school or find jobs, the future looked bright and hopeful. For the people they



had left behind in Pearce, their parents and neighbors, the future was more uncertain. The townspeople must have celebrated the rise of farming in their area because it gave their town new life.

### The Declining Years

After 1910, even with the Montana-Tonopah company's invigorating new management of the Commonwealth, mining's brightest days in Pearce were over. Plagued by periodic flooding, mechanical failures, but most of all, diminishing reserves of ore, the Commonwealth quietly entered late middle age.

As the mine began to falter, farmers and railroad workers arrived in increasing numbers, gradually replacing the remaining ranchers. The community which the mine had brought into being continued to flourish, perhaps not as in the heady days after the gold and silver strikes, but steadily all the same.

Since the late 1800s, the Sulphur Springs Valley had been dominated, both geographically and economically, by ranchers. The Chiricahua Cattle Company (CCC), incorporated in 1885, was the foremost ranch in the valley. By 1890 it had expanded into a neighboring county and become one of the best-run ranches in the southwest. For the CCC, however, successive years of droughts, use of fences and encroaching homesteaders brought an end to the heyday of cattle-raising in the valley.<sup>194</sup>

In Pearce, ranchers never constituted a significant portion of the population although at one time the Coronado Cattle Co. and the Glenn Land & Cattle Co. both had their main offices in town.<sup>195</sup> The 1900 census records 13 ranchers or cowboys living in or around Pearce making up 2.7 percent of the town's population. Ten years later, the 10 cattle-raisers formed 1.4 percent of the total population in Pearce. The decline accelerated and in 1920 there was only one cattle-related occupation listed, an employee of the Coronado Cattle Company who was most likely a clerk.<sup>196</sup>

In March, 1919, a severe drought dotted the valley with carcasses of cattle. Desperate ranchers resorted to feeding their starving cattle cottonseed cake.<sup>197</sup> The drought only accelerated the decline of cattle companies in Sulphur Springs. The once great CCC (eventually bought out by the Boice family) struggled on for almost three decades until all the ranches were liquidated by Charles Boice in 1945. Many of the smaller ranches also fell into ruin.

To a degree, the ranchers succumbed to the pressures of competing with farmers who invaded the valley shortly before 1910. In February, 1909, Congress recognized 640-acre homesteads filed under the Desert Land Act. The event triggered a land rush as 1,000 families from Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas arrived to establish farms in the region south of Willcox. Early in 1917, the U. S. Land Commissioner began visiting Pearce regularly for the convenience of valley residents making applications for land.<sup>198</sup>

The Prospector in 1914 reported that a large number of farmers in the valley made Pearce their headquarters for supplies and a place to sell their produce as well as the shipping point to other parts of the country.<sup>199</sup> That year also saw an especially fruitful growing season — particularly for beans and corn, encouraged by plentiful rain and moderate temperatures. "[Around Pearce] Crops of corn, maize, beans, and potatoes promise a bountiful harvest, the best in 14 years," exulted the Prospector in mid-June.<sup>200</sup>

While farming experienced a surge in growth during this period, mining in Pearce, best represented by the activity of the Commonwealth, stagnated. In 1916, indicative of hard times, the Commonwealth company responded to an inquiry from another Arizona mining company admitting to "paying the lowest wages of any place in the state ... because we cannot do any better."<sup>201</sup>

For a time around 1917, Commonwealth managers even considered reversing their fortunes by selling the water in the mine — flowing at 2 million gallons per day — to irrigate the region's farmlands. The managers had calculated that the amount of water the mine could furnish in one year would be enough to cover 3,600 acres with six inches of water.<sup>202</sup>

America's entry into World War I temporarily revived the mine's fortunes. The war's demand for basic materials produced a boom for the mining industry.

The Commonwealth Development Co., formed in 1917 under A.Y. Smith's direction, participated in the boom. It created jobs and brought men to the revived mine. Along with the active mines at nearby Gleeson and Courtland, the Commonwealth contributed, albeit briefly, to an easy-flowing prosperity returning to this part of the valley.

In October, 1918, the Courtland Arizonan remarked, "High wages have made the cost of high living. Sundays and evenings see the muckers in their Fords, the shifters in their Overlands, the foreman in their big Studebakers and bosses in the Winters sailing over the good roads of Cochise County."<sup>203</sup>

This revival of mining at the Commonwealth and other mines around Pearce created jobs for 90 miners by 1920. As a result of the resurgence in the industry, miners in 1920 constituted 14.9 percent of the town population contrasted with 7.5 percent 10 years earlier.<sup>204</sup>

While it helped the mines around Pearce revive, the war placed demands on the town. At first, war meant little more than inconveniences such as abstaining from beef and pork on Tuesdays beginning March 12, 1918.<sup>205</sup>

But in late May, 1918, all men 21 years of age were required to register for possible wartime service. Four months later, every man between the ages of 18 and 40 had to register. Pearce set up its registration center in Huddy Hall.<sup>206</sup>

The town sent its share of soldiers to Europe, although the exact number is unknown. Clay McKnight died in action in Europe;<sup>207</sup> the merchant Charles Renaud's two sons also served in France. Another young man, Charles Junge, was wounded in battle while his brother August was killed in the Argonne Forest.<sup>208</sup>

Pearce contributed to the war effort in other ways. The women's auxiliary, with an average attendance of 18 to 20 twice a week, supported the domestic front. The girls' class, for example, held a demonstration session on food conservation with wheat substitutes.<sup>209</sup>

The Sulphur Springs Valley branch of the Red Cross, headed by Effie Smith of Pearce, won recognition at Red Cross headquarters as "the best one in the whole western jurisdiction."<sup>210</sup> It was the first branch in the southwest to furnish beds to a base hospital in France.<sup>211</sup> Members prepared medical supplies, such as gauze compresses and other necessities for the war front.

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When peace finally arrived, Pearce joined in the national celebration. "Pearce was thrown into feverish excitement on the announcement of the



armistice," reported the Courtland Arizonan. "Bells were rung, whistles blew, and a general holiday was taken for a peace celebration."<sup>212</sup>

Normal life, as normal as it could be after participating in a world war, resumed as those who had left returned home. Charles Junge, gassed and wounded, was sent to the Calumet & Arizona hospital in Bisbee for treatment.<sup>213</sup> Ernest Renaud returned to his family in Pearce (the fate of August is uncertain).

Reunited families went on hunting parties and outings once more and couples eagerly attended dances in nearby Light and Servoss. The Idle Hour Theater re-opened and offered shows every Saturday.<sup>214</sup>

At the end of the war, Pearce ranked as the third most important business town in the county behind Douglas and Willcox. With an estimated population of 1,500, including neighboring areas, Pearce became the business center of Sulphur Springs Valley by December of 1919. Where mining and cattle-raising once provided the main support for Pearce's businesses, now half of the trade volume came from those homesteading and farming in the vicinity.<sup>215</sup>

Not only did the community survive, it flourished. After all, community can consist of more than an association of neighbors or a collection of organizations; it connotes a sense of fellowship and a degree of solidarity among those who distinguish themselves collectively. For people in Pearce, despite the decline of mining, life proceeded much as it had always done. A Mexican wedding in the Catholic church in town was still news to commemorate,<sup>216</sup> and the birth of a daughter was still reason for exuberant excitement:

"Percy Wilson ... came to his store Tuesday morning and his customers wondered what was the matter with him.... He broke eggs and spilled beans and it is reported that he attempted to make an aeroplane out of his automobile. The reason was that Dr. Nichols announced the birth of a baby girl Monday evening.... Percy says the old auto is too slow for him now. It will take an aeroplane to keep up with him from now on."<sup>217</sup>

As contemporary newspapers show, baseball games, parties, weddings and births still brought the town together in common causes of celebration. News about Pearce in the newspapers revolved around such events, as they became focal points that drew Pearce people into a community.

Sufficient interest in 1920 prompted creation of a Town and Country Club. Its purpose was to "further the civic, social and the community life of Pearce and the surrounding country." To be a voting member, one had to be a "reputable" person and pay regular dues — \$1 for men and 50 cents for women.

Membership apparently was restricted to adults; the rules forbade children to enter the club unless accompanied by adults. The club held dances and suppers, established a library with 382 volumes by August, 1922, and opened club rooms for recreation and gatherings of all townspeople, nonmembers as well as members. By 1922, there were 150 members — over one-third of the adult population in 1920 — although 104 of them forfeited their right to vote because of unpaid dues.<sup>218</sup>

The composition of the membership and whether it was restricted to the elites or accessible to the whole population demonstrates there was an attempt to encourage a sense of togetherness and mutual support. Pearce's economy

may have changed but not the social bonds which knit residents together.

Part of the reason behind the community's stability lay in the willingness of its people to adapt to the changes occurring around them. With the growing significance of agriculture in the economy of Pearce, even the Commonwealth manager, A.Y. Smith, took an active role in promoting farming. He headed an association to encourage and expand valley irrigation.

In October, 1920, Smith announced his association's project to organize an irrigation district encompassing about 145,000 acres in the valley and to install a central pumping plant to pump the irrigation water.<sup>219</sup> By 1923, he was also serving as president of the Midwest Sugar Company with a main office in Pearce; the company encouraged the raising of sugar beets in the valley and fed a market from Trinidad, Col., to Albuquerque, N.M.<sup>220</sup>

Other town residents followed the trend of the times. Joe Bignon, 69-years-old in 1920, found ways to participate in the waves of economic prosperity that swept over Pearce, first as a saloon proprietor then as a movie theater owner. In 1920, he listed his occupation for the census as a farmer at home, which perhaps meant that he had retired from townlife to a quieter existence on one of his lots on the outskirts of town. He died in 1926, leaving to wife Ellen substantial properties including the movie theater, a home in Pearce with adjoining windmill, lots in the Bignon Addition, a mining claim in Pearce and 120 acres of land in the county.<sup>221</sup>

Charles Junge, the war veteran, decided to try his hand at farming in the valley in 1920. Ten years earlier, the son of the precinct judge, William Monmonier, Jr. had turned to agriculture as well.

Most farmers in 1910 and 1920, however, had not lived in the town before they claimed their homesteads and most gave up their enterprises within a decade. Only two farmers in the 1910 census reappear in the census 10 years later. Consequently, while farmers made up 13.6 percent of the total town population in 1910 they were only 5 percent of the population in 1920.<sup>222</sup>

Aside from changes caused by fluctuations in agriculture, the trends that shaped the population between 1900 to 1910 persisted to 1920. There were 604 people in 1920, with the proportion of females to males improving slightly since 1910, growing from 43.6 percent to 45 percent of the total population.

The number of married people increased 11 percentage points over the number in 1910 and 24 percentage points over the number in 1900. In tandem with this increase was the decrease in the percentage of single people among those 16 years and older; it decreased to 28.2 percent, from 39.3 percent 10 years earlier and 48.1 percent 20 years earlier.

Meanwhile the population continued to grow younger with mean age of residents declining to 24 years. This is not surprising in light of the increasing proportion who were children. A remarkable 40.7 percent of the total population was younger than 16 years, contrasted with 35 percent in 1910 and 27.9 percent in 1900.<sup>223</sup>

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Census figures alone, however, fail to give a sense of the society within the town during this period. Public data — maps or plats — on the physical appearance of the town at this time is scarce. Fortunately, having attended school in Pearce as an adolescent, Dick Shaw was able to provide a vivid description of at least a part of the town's layout in the early 1920s:



"Starting at Renaud's General Store, going south, came Taylor and Wilson General Store, and a community room, where the ranch wives and children could stay while their men bought supplies, had repairs made or dickered. Beyond that was a small shop, then the restaurant [run by a Japanese], then a hotel.... About a half mile north on the east side of the road was a powder magazine. About a block east of Renaud's store was a large hall where dances were held [probably Huddy's].... The railroad depot with a full-time agent was about a quarter mile east...."<sup>224</sup>

This was part of the main business section of Pearce. It was separate from the mining district where the Commonwealth had built houses for its upper level management. Not only were the company houses generally larger than most homes, they were furnished with electricity, an amenity yet unavailable to the rest of the town.<sup>225</sup> One sheltered the sole physician in town at this time, Dr. Harland Nichols, who moved into his seven-room (two bathrooms) cottage with his family in January, 1920.<sup>226</sup> Dick Shaw describes this part of town as well:

"At the south end of Pearce was the mine office and assay office.... West of the office, Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Bryant [mine bookkeeper and wife] lived with their two daughters. Another mine official lived next door and farther west the A. Y. Smiths lived.... North of Smith's was a four-room yellow brick school with a one-room annex across the baseball-athletic field. West of this the Fleethams lived. Mr. Fleetham was [the mine] engineer...."<sup>227</sup>

In 1922, Dr. Nichols left Pearce to help his pharmacist son in another part of the state. The company began searching for another physician. To one candidate, the secretary-treasurer of the Commonwealth wrote a letter describing the job and the town:

"Pearce is a small mining and valley town, with about 300 population and a large scope of population on the outside.... The outside territory extends [about 25 miles] on the south and 10 miles to the north, 35 miles to the Chiricahua Mountains on the west.... We have 2 churches, grammar school with 3 teachers, Union High School with 3 teachers, moving picture theater, 2 general stores, 1 confectionary [sic], and soft drinks, good restaurant, good hotel."<sup>228</sup>

From the census, Shaw's accounts and period letters, there emerges a picture of a small town in the American Southwest, short of being urban in our modern sense, but busy all the same. It was a place where farmers mingled with miners in the mercantile stores, where women ran households when their men were away on business and where their children attended the local schools together.

Townpeople also came together for religious worship. Despite the early appearance of worship services, in 1906, 15 different Protestant denominations in Pearce reorganized themselves into a single union church called the Church of Christ and elected to become affiliated with the Congregationalists. The actual union church had only 30 members with 25 more expected, hardly proof of pervasive religious zeal in Pearce.<sup>229</sup> Moreover, it is unclear whether these Christians ever built a permanent structure, separate from the schoolhouse, for their services.

Over the years, other denominations and preachers attempted, without much success, to plant themselves in Pearce. In 1900, Jonathan Verity, a

"minister of the Gospel," lived in town;<sup>230</sup> 10 years later, the town had a 23-year old preacher named Henry McDuff.<sup>231</sup>

Perhaps the most enduring Protestant minister was the Rev. Arther J. Benedict who began preaching in town around 1903 when he was 56-years-old.<sup>232</sup> For a period, he lived on a ranch with his family in Cochise Stronghold which was considered a part of Tombstone.<sup>233</sup> Not until 1920 did the census list him as a resident of Pearce.<sup>234</sup>

In 1928, the Presbyterians organized a church in town with 12 members and H.C. Duckett as pastor but it failed to grow and was dissolved in 1932.<sup>235</sup> By 1940, the Episcopalians had established a preaching station in Pearce for Rev. Raymond A. Kurtz. Based in Tombstone, Kurtz also periodically visited other nearby communities.<sup>236</sup>

Because of the town's high proportion of Mexicans, the Roman Catholic Church initially enjoyed a solid base of support in Pearce. At some point, Pearce's Catholic population had built a permanent church called Our Lady of Victory. The exact date of its construction is unknown.<sup>237</sup>

In 1924, an anonymous woman donated \$500 to the diocese to be used for the repair and renovation of the church in Pearce, with the stipulation that the church be re-dedicated to St. Isabel (also known as St. Elizabeth). At first, the pastor in charge feared the reaction of people to a change in titular saint and put the statue of St. Elizabeth on a side altar instead, leaving Our Lady of Victory on the main altar. On May 26, 1932, the pastor placed St. Elizabeth on the main altar, "telling people it was not a question [of] beautyfulness, but a question of justice."<sup>238</sup>

In 1961, the building was reportedly still in good condition, although abandoned, with its statues and altar cloths intact. An elderly Mexican woman faithfully kept up the building.<sup>239</sup> Even with its own church building, however, Pearce never became a separate Catholic parish nor had its own resident priest.

The Catholic community in Pearce began as a mission out of Tombstone but sometime after 1918<sup>240</sup> the diocese transferred the mission to Benson's Our Lady of Lourdes. By 1936, Rev. J.B. Dube was celebrating 7:30 Mass on the second to last Sunday of every month in Pearce.<sup>241</sup>

To supplement the services of the priests who seldom had time to do more than offer the sacraments, nuns from the Immaculate Heart of Mary Order of Tucson made regular rounds throughout the region as catechists, teaching children in every community they entered. Private homes of each community opened their doors to lodge the sisters. From July 4 to 6, 1933, for example, Sisters Celine and Frelda taught about 15 children in Pearce.

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Ironically, as the institution of church gained a stronger foothold in the community, the institution of school slipped. Attendance in the Pearce school district decreased during the decade from 1920 to 1930. From 82 students in 1920 attendance fell to 66 in 1925, dropping to 41 in 1930.<sup>242</sup> The fall in school attendance occurred during a general period of decline for Pearce which accelerated as the 1920s progressed.

The '20s brought hard times to Pearce. Many of the region's farms and homesteads began to fail, foreshadowing the economic travails of the Great Depression. The hardship of Pearce farmers constituted part of a larger pattern of economic problems that resulted in the complete collapse of the agricultural



economy in the 1930s.

Mining, too, started to decline during the 1920s, a precursor of a more general deterioration during the Depression. The mining boom fueled by the war ended in 1920 when production far surpassed demand.<sup>243</sup> The Commonwealth persevered but produced very little ore after 1927, its tailings having been exhausted.

"I am sorry to hear that the old mine is not panning out very well these times," wrote Ed Carothers, an attorney in California to F.L. Bryant, the Commonwealth secretary-treasurer, in October, 1929. "Guess you have been anticipating this condition for some time. At least you had not counted on its as a lifetime job."<sup>244</sup>

Conditions worsened. By 1933, employees were complaining about chronically late wages, a situation that disturbed T.B. Smith, the manager.

Smith wrote to then-mine owner Thomas Cole, warning, "Personally I can not go further without my wages being paid up to date ... also sufficient funds to pay all labor twice per month to carry compensation on all men working. I cannot take responsibility for [for the] ... working men otherwise."<sup>245</sup>

Implicitly recognizing the mine's irreversible decline, that same year the Southern Pacific Railroad ceased operations on its Pearce line, effectively shutting down what industry was left in the town.

With the advent of the 1930s came the hardships of the Great Depression. Pearce farmers suffered from excessively low prices for their products while producers closer to local, urban markets developed to the point they could undersell competitors. In 1935, for example, the Pearce poultry farms of R.L. Meers and Alta Vista received \$1.50 less per case at the Tucson wholesale market than did poultry farms right in Tucson that sold retail. The cost of hauling their shipments to Tucson added an extra burden on the Pearce farms.<sup>246</sup>

As the depression undermined whatever stability had kept local economies intact, the population of Pearce responded. By 1930, only 198 remained in the town precinct, a decline of 406 people from 10 years earlier.<sup>247</sup>

In the public schools from 1929 to 1938, the average daily attendance fluctuated. Pearce Union High School also suffered a decline in the average daily attendance from 47 in 1930 to 40.61 in 1938.

Pearce's high school district was unique in the county in that it did not have a single large taxpayer between the years from 1934 to 1938. Before 1934, the Southern Pacific Co. had paid 49.88 percent of the school's fund<sup>248</sup> but stopped paying property taxes to Pearce after it abandoned its track to the town. Between 1934 and 1938, the Telephone and Telegraph Co. and William Riggs were the two largest single tax payers but together provided less than 10 percent of the schools' maintenance fund.

The collapse of mining, then agriculture, the large-scale emigration out of the town and the subsequent loss of direct rail service mortally weakened the town's business sector. Beginning in the early 1930s, Pearce crumbled almost as quickly as it had assembled. During the first half of the decade, the Commonwealth mill was dismantled and sold for junk; people tore down houses to avoid paying property taxes.

The community of people persevered a little longer than the buildings. In May, 1930, there was still a Pearce baseball team to play Ash Creek and win

7-2.<sup>249</sup> A couple of years later, there would be hardly enough people to put together a baseball team. In 1935, less than 50 people lived in the town and on the nearby ranches.<sup>250</sup> The only buildings left standing were the school house, Renaud's store, the post office, a service station and a few homes.

"Why we live here no one knows, least of all ourselves. The place is dead and our only hope is that the silver mine there on the hill will reopen now the price is up 71 cents," said one disheartened resident.<sup>251</sup>

In 1941, another world war interrupted the lives of Pearce residents, those few who still remained. There was by then hardly any industry to be affected and the few remaining miners in town were sent to copper mines elsewhere. Once again, the domestic war effort included rationing food and gasoline. Again, young men left for basic training, revealing this time just how empty the town really was.

"All the young men are gone...." wrote Lucy Monmonier (wife of Charles) to a son in the navy. You know it is very trying here at home to keep a smill [sic] on our faces when our hearts are heavy with worrying."<sup>252</sup>

The war had not only taken Pearce's miners — the soul of the town — it had taken away its young people — the future of the town. It left those who stayed behind to wonder why they still remained. Perhaps in the end, they could not consider any other place home but Pearce, and perhaps they never ceased hoping another mineral discovery would send people scurrying back to revitalize the town. Together with those who had left, they echoed the same sentiment, "... ah boy those were the happy days — I wish I could have a few more like them."<sup>253</sup>

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If the emigration of the Bignons to Pearce in 1896 represents the period of rapid growth in the young mining camp, then the story of the A.Y. Smiths, particularly Effie Smith, represents the passing of Pearce.

Andrew Young Smith was born in Scotland in 1868 and came to the United States in 1882. In 1894, he met Effie Anderson, a 24-year old woman from Hope, Ark.; they married the next year.<sup>254</sup> In the early days of Pearce, A.Y. worked as a bookkeeper for the Commonwealth Mining and Milling Company.<sup>255</sup> He worked his way up, becoming mine superintendent, then president of the newly organized Commonwealth Company. The Smiths established themselves as the town's social leaders, hosting lavish parties in their old territorial style adobe home built by the company.

When affluent times waned, the Smiths left their mansion and built a small frame house.<sup>256</sup> "The couple still had parties and A.Y. was always nattily dressed in his knickers and tweeds but the glory had departed," noted the late O. Carroll Arnold in his 1989 tribute to Mrs. Smith.<sup>257</sup>

A.Y. died in his Pearce home on Oct. 13, 1931 from a paralytic stroke. Except for two years between 1912 and 1914, he and his wife had lived continuously in Pearce for more than 35 years.

During these years, Effie developed an attachment to the community and land. When she first came west from Arkansas in 1892, she had been deeply impressed with the western landscape and had taken up painting. It helped ease her transition as a young wife into the rough mining camp society of Pearce.

After the death of her infant daughter in 1896, Mrs. Smith enrolled in the Los Angeles Institute of Art, partly to assuage her grief. Returning to Pearce,



she gained a wide reputation as a talented and successful artist.

Part of the fame derived from her preference for painting only landscapes, eschewing the more common Western themes of cowboys and their animals. Myriam Toles, in her article on Mrs. Smith, remarked, "Unlike most western artists, she did not put cowboys, horses, or cattle in her scenes but confined her work to the beauty of Arizona skies and mountains with their rich and ever-changing colors."<sup>258</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, her impressionistic paintings hung in the El Tovar Hotel, the Santa Rita Hotel in Tucson and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. Her paintings provided the main income for her and her husband during their later years in Pearce, with her large canvases of the Grand Canyon selling for \$1,500 and the small ones for \$250.

After she moved to Douglas in 1940, she taught art classes and spoke before U.S.O. assemblies and to Douglas Airbase personnel during World War II. Much of her time she spent promoting art and sharing her knowledge with various clubs and schools. She continued painting, producing some of her finest work during this period. To her customary signature of E.A. Smith she now added "Mrs. A.Y." in honor of her husband.<sup>259</sup>

Toles observed, "A very private person, she had many friends but no intimates. She never wanted to be called anything but Mrs. Smith."<sup>260</sup>

Mrs. Smith spent her last years painting in the Pioneer Home in Prescott and died on April 21, 1955.

Mrs. Smith's story provides a counterpoint to the view of Pearce as a town



Mrs. A.Y. Smith with a painting class in the 1940s. (Courtesy Arizona Pioneers Home)

created and built by men. In the early days of omnipresent masculinity — prospectors, miners, cattle-hands, storekeepers — women often seemed to assume a peripheral role in the shaping of the town. A small number of women became boarding housekeepers, laundry operators, teachers and prostitutes but rarely did they emerge as public figures. Consequently, it is easy for those who examine the period to notice only the prominent figures in this panorama of the past.

We tend to overlook the silent but significant presence of individuals in the background until someone like Mrs. A.Y. Smith appears to remind us. When she was alive, one of her primary concerns was pointing out the contributions of women in art such as the baskets and pottery of ancient Native American women in the Southwest.<sup>261</sup>

More than most residents, Effie Smith seemed to develop the deepest attachment to the land. Leaving Pearce in 1940, she could very well have echoed the sentiment of Dame Shirley upon her departure from a California mining camp in 1852, "My heart is heavy at the thought of departing forever from this place. I like this wild and barbarous life; I leave it with regret."<sup>262</sup>

Perhaps Effie Smith stayed in Pearce for so long out of more than mere habit or even economic necessity but because she truly loved the land where she lived, with all its hardships as well as beauties. Her paintings of this land still survive; some belong to art collections and others hang in private homes, perhaps a gift of Mrs. A.Y. herself. A famous figure in her day, she has been — the same as her adopted town — largely forgotten, her deeds and accomplishments obscured by the distance of time.

#### CONCLUSION

When the Commonwealth finally shut down in 1932, it closed, by extension, the town itself. By 1962, the population of Pearce had dwindled to 12 individuals.<sup>263</sup> It was a far cry from the former days when miners strolled the streets, cowboys rode dusty trails into town, the pounding of the stamp mills could be heard over the chatter of town life, and the future looked bright. Pearce finally became silent and still, its mines abandoned. The time when Pearce was a living, bustling town had ended at last.

Less than 10 years after Effie Smith moved to Douglas, the town she left was reduced to a skeleton of its former self. A cafe served cold drinks and short orders to the few residents who worked in ranching or mining nearby. On Main Street, the Renaud store still stocked merchandise, including relics of the glory days, and the post office across from it still gave out mail to the area's ranchers. The most lively place in town was the schoolhouse, which continued to educate children from that region of the valley.

As for the Commonwealth, various companies periodically attempt to work the mine but without much success. Its 1,500-foot-deep shaft and 35 miles of underground tunnels<sup>264</sup> survive as tributes — albeit unseen by the passing visitor — to the labor of countless miners between 1895 and 1933.

In 1991, two Colorado companies joined in a venture to develop the Commonwealth at Pearce. Westland Minerals Exploration Company agreed to work with the Western States Mineral Corporation to test the mine's ore reserves, determine the feasibility of extensive mining and proceed with the mining if test results were favorable.<sup>265</sup> Apparently, the project fell through because in June, 1994, Pearce Hill showed no signs of activity nor was modern equipment waiting to be used.



Pearce was, as noted journalist Ruth Mellenbruch wrote in 1948, "sleeping itself into oblivion."<sup>266</sup> For the next 40 or so years, the history of the town became reduced to the history of its Old Store, about the only item newspapers found newsworthy.

In 1960, it appeared that even the Old Store would finally close its doors permanently when the last owners, Mr. and Mrs. K. Albert Rothe died. It reopened, however, in early 1961 with new owners and renewed business.

Ike Cornish had been a Chicago salesman searching for a place to retire when he found Pearce on one of his sales trips. When the Rothe estate offered the old store for sale, Cornish bought it as soon as he could.

In 1961, the old store was one of the largest adobe buildings in Arizona, its main room alone measuring 95 feet by 36 feet. Best of all, it was still in much the same condition as it was at the turn of the century with its oak counters, pot-bellied stove, antique cash register and wall telephones. Under the Cornishes, the Old Store again sold groceries, feed, tools, stocks and other items it had once sold when the town was flourishing.

After Cornish's 27-year old son was fatally shot by his (the son's) 22-year old wife, the parents converted part of the store into a railroad museum — the first in the state — in memory of their son. The American Association of Railroads accredited it before it was even finished.<sup>267</sup>

The Old Store passed into new hands in 1965 when Dr. Raymond N. Dooley, president of Lincoln College in Illinois, purchased it from the Cornishes. Dooley turned it into a museum, while continuing to sell modern



The interior of "The Old Store" in June, 1976. (Photograph by Enid Howard)

merchandise needed by the ranchers and a growing retirement community. The Old Store, with its two-foot adobe walls and ceiling with original paint, became a monument to the past.

"We still heat it with the old pot-bellied stove, once set in the sand as a safety precaution to protect the wooden floor from hot coals. It is said that old-timers, sitting around the stove, used to spit in the sand. Today's customers and visitors, of course, aren't that uncouth," said the store manager's husband, Bill Barnes.

In 1969, while looking for a place to retire in Arizona, John and Ginger Thurman from Lake Buff, Ill., saw the Old Store. Intrigued by the challenge of making it into a profitable business, the Thurmans bought the store and remodelled its interior to look more fully like a store from the early 1900s.

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In his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Frederick Jackson Turner called the frontier "the meeting point between savagery and civilization."<sup>269</sup>

For over a century, American historians have debated the validity of Turner's frontier thesis. Most have modified it and some have discarded it altogether as an accurate explanation of the migration west and its significance to American history. In its own way, the story of Pearce contributes to this debate and serves as a test of Turner's ideas.

Before the first tent was erected on the site of what would become Pearce, there was only a wide open valley. There was little farming then, no cities, no railroads. When the Pearces moved in and took to ranching, the same as everyone else in the valley, it was as if they had been mastered by the wilderness and assumed its way of life. Then they struck gold and silver, paving the way for a new group of emigrants.

These new people cleared land, bought property lots, built houses, opened schools and stores, and exhibited "the picture and forms of plain, frugal life."<sup>270</sup>

A third wave of emigrants, the capitalists and businessmen, rolled into town. These people — men such as John Brockman, Richard Penrose, and later, Charles Knox — built more sophisticated equipment for the mine, paid for the railroad, established bigger homes with electricity, water pipes and telephone lines. In short, they brought with them the trappings of an urban society.

Wave succeeds wave as people packed and left, in search of more opportunity and wider spaces elsewhere. Those who stayed formed a community. Life could seem if not materially rich, at least content. So far, with minor variations, Turner's thesis seems to hold for Pearce.

But a closer examination of Pearce's development reveals certain inherent weaknesses in the frontier thesis. Turner formulated his idea with farmers in mind, minimizing the significance of miners and ranchers who were stages in the progress leading to the apogee of farms.

From the early days, the Sulphur Springs Valley was occupied by ranchers. Even if this point is modified by considering ranching as the "wilderness" point in Turner's colonizing sequence, it does not explain why ranchers themselves failed to initiate the ascent to urban civilization.



Not until the miners came did large-scale settlement begin. When the farmers finally arrived, over a decade after the miners, they did not fundamentally change Pearce's development. Pearce did not become more urban, democratic or civilized after the farmers came than it had been before they came.

Moreover, according to Turner, "the frontier is productive of individualism.... [which] has from the beginning promoted democracy."<sup>271</sup> If this is true, then the frontier promoted democracy for only a portion of the population.

Early on, white people in Pearce delineated a boundary around themselves and opened their community to select new arrivals. For the many Mexicans who lived in Pearce, discrimination in work wages and regular segregation from the whites — in residential neighborhoods, schools, even recreational baseball — proved the elusiveness of democracy and social egalitarianism for those who did not share white skin color or European background.

"The frontier is a line of the most rapid and effective Americanization," said Turner,<sup>272</sup> but Pearce's history asks for whom? The Mexicans, Chinese, blacks and Japanese seldom, if ever, participated in the process of Americanization. Rather, they remained the margins of society, left with the lowest-paying or most unskilled jobs. America in its ideals professes personal liberty and egalitarianism for all. If people refuse to practice those ideals in their entirety, they have failed to become "American" as much as those who have not been permitted to practice those ideals. Pearce as a frontier, then, failed to promote "Americanization" in the way Turner envisioned it; instead, it harbored an arbitrary systematic discrimination and denial of democracy to segments of its population.

Lastly, Pearce's development never quite followed the smooth sequence from primitive hut to wood house to brick building. The town's fortunes fluctuated with the vicissitudes of the mining economy in particular but also to an extent the national economy as a whole.

When the mining economy prospered, the Commonwealth flourished and the town basked in good times. A miners' strike or layoff of workers because of over-flowing ore bins could shake the town's confidence and threatened its businesses.

The Depression of the 1920s and 1930s completely undermined the remaining stability of Pearce's economy, bankrupting farmers and closing mines. No life, no matter how frugal or plain, no number of capitalists and no rising standard of living could save the town from final decline.

That Pearce did decline and disappeared back into the valley from which it came poses a problem for Turner's thesis. How does a frontier, once civilized, return to wilderness and savagery? To be sure, a few buildings still stand and some people, mostly retirees, live there, but no progress in urbanization has occurred since the 1930s.

Despite attempts to diversify the economy by encouraging agriculture, Pearce remained a Western mining town to the end. Enmeshed within the cyclical fortunes of an extractive industry, it grew when the industry rose and fell when it slipped.

Turner ignored or failed to recognize the intricate ties between local economies and the larger, national and international economies. The West, with its dependence on Eastern capital, remained bound to cities in the East or

sometimes, West Coast.

Brockman came from New Mexico and Penrose and Barringer came from Pennsylvania. New York, Philadelphia, London, Boston and Los Angeles supplied investors who poured capital into the development of the Commonwealth mine. Thus, ultimately, in spite of Turner's paean to cheap land and freedom from contaminating Eastern habits and urban influence, the "East" played a major role in the growth of Pearce.

The Western author Lawrence Powell once wrote, "To understand history is to concede that all cultures end."<sup>273</sup> The history of Pearce illustrates Powell's observation. As its last old-timers pass away, the opportunity to know Pearce from someone who lived there progressively diminishes. In the future, all that will be left behind will be photographs, old records, second-hand memories, and awkward bursts of tribute from those who, like me, never knew the living Pearce.

**About the author:** Tucson resident Lillian Cheng wrote this article as part of her thesis at Amherst College. She graduated summa cum laude and is now attending the University of Arizona College of Law.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> WPA 243.

<sup>2</sup> Faulk, *Tombstone* 26-32, 68-69.

Rodman Wilson Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West 1848-1880* (New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1963) 159. Hereafter notated as *Mining Frontiers*.

WPA 243.

WPA 245.

<sup>4</sup> The gunfight did not actually take place in the Corral but on Fremont Street, to which the rear entrance of the OK stable lot led out. (Faulk, *Tombstone* 149-152) One would not realize that fact from visiting the site, since the town today has fake models re-enacting the scene set up in the Corral; perhaps townspeople thought models on the street would block too much traffic.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret G. Myers, *A Financial History of the United States* (New York: Columbia UP, 1970), 197-198, 214.

<sup>6</sup> Faulk, *Tombstone* 149.

WPA 244-45.

<sup>7</sup> *Portrait and Biographical Record of Arizona* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing, 1901) n.p. As can be imagined, short of digging up family records in England, information on the life of James Pearce is scarce. Chapman's biographical record is the only such volume where I found anything written about him, dating back to the early 1900s. Even Chapman's short article was ambiguous, for example, omitting the town of his birth and giving the month and date of his entrance into Arizona but not the year.

<sup>8</sup> Nell Murbarger, *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls* (Los Angeles: Westernlore, 1964) 251-52. Bob Thomas, "Boomtown Gone, With Few Traces," *Arizona Republic* 15 March 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Lynn R. Bailey, *We'll All Wear Silk Hats* (Tucson: Westernlore, 1994) 19-23, 159-161. Burgess, "Sulphur Springs Valley," 10-13.

*The Last Frontier* (n.p.: Sulphur Springs Bicentennial Committee, 1976) n.p.

Nell Murbarger, *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls* 251-52.

<sup>10</sup> Murbarger, *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls* 252.



Lewis Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," master's thesis, Department of Geology (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1927) 3.

The Tombstone Prospector also reported a third version of the story in which an unidentified prospector brings samples of the ledge to William Pierce [Pearce]. William is the name of a son but the article treats him as the father so there is some confusion on the identification of which Pearce man located the claims.

We cannot entirely trust the Prospector's story since the newspaper was not overly concerned with ascertaining the true facts of its articles, at least during this period. The most common story I have read out of over a dozen is that James Pearce — the father — first discovered the ore, a story apparently originating from his own mouth, as alluded to in Murbarger's account but also in others as well. The similarity between the names of the father and son — James and John, respectively — further confuses the issue, especially since, according to newspaper sources (Ruth Mellenbruch, Daily Star Tucson 1 Aug. 1948; Eileen Rowedder, Seasons 29 July 1993, among others) the father's full name was John James Pearce. Likewise son John's middle initial was "J" and one can only speculate what name that hid.

1. 8. "A New Find," Tombstone Prospector 19 March 1895.  
12 Bailey, We'll All Wear Silk Hats 161.  
13 Cochise County Records of Mine Locations, Book 13: pages 124-25, 134-36, 203, 236.  
14 Phoenix Herald 15 August 1895.  
15 Edward J. Kelley, "Pearce Mine Yielded Millions," Arizona Range News 2 Jan. 1931:

- Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 252.  
Thomas, "Boomtown Gone, With Few Traces."  
16 Tombstone Prospector 19 March 1895.  
17 Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 252.  
Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 3.  
Bob Svejcar, "Gold Camp's Old Store Will Finally Bite the Dust," Arizona Daily Star 29 March 1987 (date uncertain).

The reported assays figures are probably inflated, as people tended to exaggerate the amount of gold and silver found. Nonetheless, Pearce's finds were undoubtedly very rich.

- 18 Faulk, Tombstone 45.  
19 Tombstone Prospector 27 March 1895.  
20 Tombstone Prospector 29 March 1895.  
21 Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 3.  
22 Tombstone Prospector 3 April, 30 April 1895.  
23 Tombstone Prospector 30 April 1895.  
24 Helen R. Fairbanks and Charles P. Berkey, Life and Letters of R.A.F. Penrose Jr. (New York: Geological Society of America, 1952) 194.  
Hereafter notated as R.A.F. Penrose Jr.  
25 Tombstone Prospector 30 April 1895.  
26 Courtland Arizonan 2 Feb. 1910.  
27 Tombstone Prospector 27 May 1895, 25 Jan. 1896.  
28 Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 253.  
Tombstone Prospector 22 March 1895; 25 Jan. 1896.  
29 Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 3.  
30 Tombstone Prospector 13 May 1895.  
31 Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 253.  
Tombstone Prospector 3 April 1895.  
32 Helen J. Lundwall, ed. Pioneering in Territorial Silver City: H.B. Ailman's Recollections of Silver City and the Southwest, 1871-1892. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1983) 98-101.

Hereafter notated as Pioneering in Territorial Silver City.

Apparently, Brockman was a ruthless businessman who was not above perjury and manipulating his partners, Harry Ailman and Henry Meredith, in order to gain sole possession of the Silver City First National Bank property and stock which they had jointly owned. Rather than draw out the legal battle in court, Ailman and Meredith agreed to give up their stock to Brockman in return for partial compensation. It was an incident which left Ailman embittered toward his former business associate.

Lundwall, Pioneering in Territorial Silver City Endnote 21 on p. 178-79.

- 33 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 163-64.  
34 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 7, 193.  
35 In July, 1884, in fact, the three had organized a company to develop mining property in the White Signal district, south of Silver City. Unfortunately for them, there was not enough water near the property to operate the mill and the value of the ore extracted was much less than expected. Three months after they had begun, operations ceased.  
Lundwall, ed. Pioneering in Territorial Silver City Endnote 23 on p. 179.  
36 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 194.  
Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 253.  
Eileen Rowedder, "Pearce ... the Last 'Gold Fever' Town in Arizona," Seasons 29 July 1993: 22.  
Svejcar, "Gold Camp's Old Store Will Finally Bite the Dust."  
Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 3.  
Sulphur Valley News 25 Aug. 1896: 1.  
Tombstone Prospector 28 April 1896.  
Discrepancies among sources make it difficult to ascertain the facts short of going to the Commonwealth records and most of those records from this period (1895-1900) have disappeared. In recounting the deal between Brockman and his associates and the Pearces, I have assembled information from various sources in an attempt to reconcile the different details. For example, Fairbanks and Berkey do not mention the bonded offer of \$275,000 nor Brockman working the mine yet they mention other details such as the attitude of the investors toward Ma Pearce as a "nuisance" which was, not surprisingly, lacking in other sources. Likewise, while Smith reported the original payment to be spread out over a period of two years, journalist Bernie Cosulich who supposedly abstracted Smith's article reported it to be 10 years.  
37 Joseph Stanley-Brown, "Memorial of Richard Alexander Fullerton Penrose Jr.," Geological Society of America Bulletin (New York: Geological Society of America, 1933) 85.  
38 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 194.  
39 Tombstone Prospector 13 Dec. 1895.  
40 Articles of Incorporation of The Commonwealth Mining and Milling Company, Filed and recorded at the Cochise County Recorder's Office, Tombstone, Arizona. 9 May 1896.  
41 Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 3-4.  
42 Tombstone Prospector 21 July 1896: 4.  
43 Sulphur Valley News 24 Sept. 1895.  
44 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 194.  
Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 4.  
Sulphur Valley News 8 Dec. 1896.  
45 Tombstone Prospector 21 Sept. 1897.  
46 Sulphur Valley News 24 Nov. 1896.  
Tombstone Prospector 22 Oct. 1897.  
47 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 194.  
Vernon B. Schultz, Southwestern Town (n.p.: n.p., 1964) 85-86.  
Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 5.  
48 Tombstone Prospector 30 July 1897.  
49 Arizona Range News 2 Jan. 1931: 1.  
50 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 194.  
51 Schultz, Southwestern Town 86.  
52 slope: "a usu. steplike excavation underground for the removal of ore that is formed as the ore is mined in successive layers."  
Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Springfield: G&C Merriam, 1961) 2251.  
53 Rowedder, "Pearce ... the Last 'Gold Fever' Town in Arizona," \*.  
Schultz, Southwestern Town 86.  
Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 5-6.  
Tombstone Prospector 29 Jan. 1904.  
54 Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 194-195.  
Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 254.

After Pearce, Penrose moved on to copper mining in Bingham Canyon, Utah, where he was instrumental in the formation of the Utah Copper Company. Of Penrose, E.F. Schaff, a historian of the southwest who had worked under him at the National Academy of Sciences in Philadelphia, once said, "He got his pockets full and quit. When it [the mine] started tapering off



he got out of the picture." A highly successful geologist and investor who was once a candidate for the office of governor in Arizona territory, Penrose was, among numerous positions, president of the Geological Society of America and National Academy of Sciences. He died on July 30, 1931, leaving approximately \$10 million — a large portion of his wealth — to be divided evenly between the Geological Society of America and American Philosophical Society.

Monmonier Interviews, audiocassette, by E.F. Schaff, 2 Feb. 1971 for Arizona Pioneers Historical Society.

<sup>55</sup> Fairbanks and Berkey, R.A.F. Penrose Jr. 1-2, 195, 203, 752-753.  
<sup>56</sup> T.A. Rickard, A History of American Mining (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1932) 220.  
<sup>57</sup> Shelly Olson and Roger Myers, "Processed Abstract of Commonwealth Records" (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1989) n.p.

Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 6-7.  
<sup>58</sup> Tombstone Prospector 21 Aug. 1905.  
<sup>59</sup> Tombstone Prospector 21 Aug. 1905: 1.  
<sup>60</sup> 11 July 1911: 1.

<sup>61</sup> Courtland Arizonan 25 April 1910.  
<sup>62</sup> Courtland Arizonan 25 April 1910.  
<sup>63</sup> Courtland Arizonan 9 April 1910.  
<sup>64</sup> John Brockman left Pearce in 1910, presumably because of the change in company ownership. His obituary in 1925 recalled this period in his life:

Disposing of his mining interests in Arizona, he removed to Los Angeles, then in its infancy as a city, and by judicious investments in downtown realty, became one of the leading capitalists of southern California, and a multimillionaire.

He died of pneumonia at the age of 85 in his home in Glendale, Calif.

Silver City Independent 31 March 1925.

<sup>65</sup> Commonwealth Records, Box 1.  
<sup>66</sup> Courtland Arizonan 13 Jan. 1912.  
<sup>67</sup> Olson and Myers, "Abstract of Commonwealth Records."  
<sup>68</sup> Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 7.  
<sup>69</sup> Commonwealth Records, Box 2, File 3.  
<sup>70</sup> There is no date or name of the author on the letter but it was in a file with other documents dating before 1918. Presumably, the sentiments of the letter writer could have been applied to more than one period in the life of the Commonwealth mine but it appears they arose during this time around 1917.

<sup>71</sup> Commonwealth Records, Box 1, File 11.  
<sup>72</sup> Olson and Myers, "Abstract of the Commonwealth Mine Records."  
<sup>73</sup> Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 8.  
<sup>74</sup> Commonwealth Records, Box 2, File 3.  
<sup>75</sup> Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 254.  
<sup>76</sup> Schultz, Southwestern Town 87.  
<sup>77</sup> Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 8.  
<sup>78</sup> Olson and Myers, "Abstract of the Commonwealth Mine Records."  
<sup>79</sup> Rowedder, "Pearce ... The Last 'Gold Fever' Town in Arizona."  
<sup>80</sup> Schultz, Southwestern Town 87.  
<sup>81</sup> Rickard, A History of American Mining 397-99.  
<sup>82</sup> Bernard Cosulich, "Two Old Camps Definitely Die: Pearce and Dragoon Not Even

Hopeful of New Lease on Life," Tucson Daily Citizen 28 April 1935.

<sup>83</sup> Schultz, Southwestern Town 87.  
<sup>84</sup> Sulphur Springs Valley News (Willcox, Ariz.), 2 April 1895.  
<sup>85</sup> Murbarger, Ghosts of the Adobe Walls 253.  
<sup>86</sup> Tombstone Prospector 25 Jan. 1896: 4.  
<sup>87</sup> 27 Jan. 1896: 4.

John and Lillian Theobald, Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters (Phoenix, Arizona Historical Foundation, 1961) 118.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Monmonier, "A Personal Letter to Mr. Theodore Stites of Phoenix, Arizona; 18 Aug. 1960," Monmonier Family Records (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections).  
<sup>89</sup> Tombstone Prospector 30 March 1896.

<sup>90</sup> "Stories by Roy English," transcript of taped interview by E.F. Schaff for the Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, n.d.) 5.

<sup>91</sup> Tombstone Prospector 21 July 1896: 4.  
<sup>92</sup> Tombstone Prospector 25 Jan. 1896.  
<sup>93</sup> Tombstone Prospector 5 March 1896.  
<sup>94</sup> Tombstone Prospector 25 Jan. 1896.  
<sup>95</sup> Sulphur Valley News (Willcox, Arizona) 4 Sept. 1896.  
<sup>96</sup> Sulphur Valley News 22 Dec. 1896.  
<sup>97</sup> Tombstone Prospector 13 Oct. 1897.  
<sup>98</sup> Tombstone Prospector 14 July 1896.  
<sup>99</sup> Smith, "The Geology of the Commonwealth Mine," 2.  
<sup>100</sup> Tombstone Prospector 28 Nov. 1897.  
<sup>101</sup> Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule (Washington, D.C.: National Archives).

<sup>102</sup> Sulphur Valley News 25 Aug. 1896: 1.  
<sup>103</sup> Tombstone Prospector 29 May 1896: 4.

This same issue of the Prospector reported that water was sold for 25 cents per barrel and that pipes to be laid throughout town were in the planning. As water continued to be delivered in barrels by wagon, however, it seems the pipes were not laid out as quickly as hoped.

<sup>104</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule (Washington, D.C.: National Archives).

<sup>105</sup> "Copper Days," Tucson Star 1966. (Photograph with caption.)  
<sup>106</sup> Tombstone Prospector 18 July 1896: 3.

<sup>107</sup> G. W. Pittock, "Story of the Pearce Mines," Sunset Magazine Nov. 1903: 170.  
<sup>108</sup> According to Pittock, Tombstone also lost many of its buildings to Bisbee and to ranches in the vicinity.

<sup>109</sup> Roy English interview by E.F. Schaff, transcript: 19.  
<sup>110</sup> Ben T. Traywick, "Tombstone's Ladies of the Night," Arizona Sheriff Dec. 1977: 7-8.  
<sup>111</sup> C.L. Sonnichsen, Billy King's Tombstone: The Private Life of an Arizona Boom Town (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1972) 110-11. Hereafter notated as Billy King's Tombstone.  
<sup>112</sup> Traywick, "Tombstone's Ladies of the Night," 7-8.

<sup>113</sup> WPA Guide to 1930's Arizona (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1989) 247. Hereafter notated as WPA.

<sup>114</sup> Tombstone Prospector 20 July 1895.  
<sup>115</sup> Tombstone Prospector 30 March 1896.  
<sup>116</sup> Sonnichsen, Billy King's Tombstone 111-12.  
<sup>117</sup> Roy English interview by E.F. Schaff, transcript: 19-20.  
<sup>118</sup> Johnnie Sue Bradshaw, "Historical Data Given on Pearce Cemetery," no date; no newspaper identification. Clipping from "Pearce File" (Tucson: Public Library, Main Branch).  
<sup>119</sup> Paul Allen, "Closing Time," Tucson Citizen 16 May 1897: 2A.  
<sup>120</sup> Margaret Kuehlthau, "Old Store at Pearce Looks Eagerly Ahead," Tucson Citizen 25 Nov. 1965: 29.

<sup>121</sup> George L. Mayo, "The Death of an Arizona Mining Town: Pearce, Arizona and the Politics of Greed," History Now Nov. 1984: 2. (Tucson: University of Arizona Department of History.) Hereafter notated as "The Death of an Arizona Mining Town."

<sup>122</sup> Charles Monmonier, "The Train Robbery at Cochise Station, Cochise County, Arizona" and "Reminiscences," Monmonier Family Records.

<sup>123</sup> Courtland Arizonan 26 Dec. 1914.  
<sup>124</sup> Sulphur Valley News 4 Sept. 1896.

<sup>125</sup> Grace McCool, "Cochise County ... Land of History," Sunsiter (Pearce-Sunsites, Arizona) 15 March 1995: 2.

<sup>126</sup> Letter to Theodore Stites, Monmonier Family Records.  
<sup>127</sup> Reminiscences of Charles Monmonier, manuscript, Monmonier Family Records. (Tucson: University of Arizona Special Collections.)

<sup>128</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule. (Washington, D.C.: National Archives.)

<sup>129</sup> Reminiscences of Charles Monmonier, Monmonier Family Records.  
<sup>130</sup> Monmonier taped interviews by E.F. Schaff for Arizona Pioneer Society, Feb. 2, 1971. (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society.)

<sup>131</sup> Marion S. Goldman, Gold Diggers and Silver Miners (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1981) 16.



<sup>110</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>111</sup> Bill Moore, "Ghost Town Destined for Role as Museum," The Arizona Daily Star 15 July 1962. (Tucson, Arizona)  
<sup>112</sup> Tombstone Prospector 29 October 1897.  
<sup>113</sup> Ruth Mellenbruch, "Pearce, Booming Town at Turn of Century, Now Sleeping Community," Arizona Range News 24 March 1950.  
<sup>114</sup> Charles Monmonier, "The Train Robbery at Cochise Station, Cochise County, Arizona," Monmonier Family Records.  
<sup>115</sup> James M. Barney, "Arizona's Last Successful Train Robbery," The Sheriff Magazine Vol. VII, No. 8, Sept. 1948: 6.  
<sup>116</sup> Tombstone Prospector 7 Nov. 1898.  
<sup>117</sup> Charles Monmonier, "The Train Robbery at Cochise Station, Cochise County, Arizona," Monmonier Family Records.  
<sup>118</sup> Charles Monmonier, "The Train Robbery at Cochise Station, Cochise County, Arizona," Monmonier Family Records.  
 Stiles, one of the co-conspirators of the 1899 Cochise Station robbery, worked as a law officer under the jurisdiction of Judge William Monmonier, Sr., the father of Charles Monmonier.  
<sup>119</sup> George L. Mayo, "The Death of an Arizona Mining Town," History Now.  
 Mayo did not provide dates for the incidents and contemporary newspapers do not mention them. I probably simply failed to uncover the sources which describe the two events, sources which unfortunately are not cited in the copy of Mayo's report which I received.  
<sup>120</sup> Sulphur Valley News 1 Sept. 1896.  
<sup>121</sup> Sulphur Valley News 17 Nov. 1896.  
<sup>122</sup> Sonnichsen, Billy King's Tombstone 73-74.  
<sup>123</sup> Sonnichsen, Billy King's Tombstone 112-13.  
<sup>124</sup> Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule (Washington, D.C.: National Archives).  
 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule (Phoenix, Arizona: State Archives).  
<sup>125</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>126</sup> Goldman, Gold Diggers and Silver Miners 16.  
<sup>127</sup> Tombstone Prospector 28 Oct. 1901.  
<sup>128</sup> Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>129</sup> Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>130</sup> Goldman, Gold Miners and Silver Diggers 35.  
<sup>131</sup> Tombstone Prospector 5 March 1896.  
<sup>132</sup> Tombstone Prospector 25 Jan. 1896.  
<sup>133</sup> Deeds of Real Estate, Book 14, pp. 470-71. (Bisbee, Cochise County Recorder's Office.)  
<sup>134</sup> Book of Probate Orders, Vol. 10, pp. 312-13. (Bisbee, Cochise County Recorder's Office.)  
<sup>135</sup> Tombstone Prospector 30 March 1896.  
<sup>136</sup> Sulphur Valley News 1 Sept. 1896.  
 22 Sept. 1896.  
<sup>137</sup> Tombstone Prospector 21 Sept. 1897.  
<sup>138</sup> Tombstone Prospector 28 Nov. 1897.  
 1 Feb. 1898.  
<sup>139</sup> Tombstone Prospector 27 Feb. 1898.  
<sup>140</sup> Faulk, Arizona: A Short History 156.  
<sup>141</sup> Tombstone Prospector 23 April 1904: 4.  
<sup>142</sup> Box 1, File 1, Monmonier Family Records.  
Arizona Range News 23 Oct. 1931: 1.  
<sup>143</sup> Sulphur Valley News 15 Sept. 1896.  
<sup>144</sup> Sulphur Valley News 17 Nov. 1896.  
 8 Dec. 1896.  
<sup>145</sup> Sulphur Valley News 8 Dec. 1896.  
<sup>146</sup> Tombstone Prospector 6 July 1897.  
<sup>147</sup> Richard White, "It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the

American West (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1991) 375. Hereafter notated as A New History of the American West.

<sup>148</sup> Sulphur Valley News 22 Sept. 1896.  
<sup>149</sup> Sulphur Valley News 17 Nov. 1896.  
<sup>150</sup> Sulphur Valley News 22 Dec. 1896.  
<sup>151</sup> Tombstone Prospector 21 Sept. 1897.  
<sup>152</sup> Tombstone Prospector 16 Sept. 1914.  
<sup>153</sup> Tombstone Prospector 2 Feb. 1898.  
<sup>154</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>155</sup> Tombstone Prospector 23 Nov. 1896.  
<sup>156</sup> "Commonwealth Closed," Tombstone Prospector 28 Oct. 1901.  
<sup>157</sup> Tombstone Prospector 25 Oct. 1901.  
<sup>158</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Because Mexicans were officially listed as racially white, distinguishing the Mexicans in Pearce required an amount of guesswork. I depended mainly on names and place of birth. The numbers are probably slightly higher than what I listed because there did exist families where white men were married to Mexican women and had children. Even without adding such households, however, the significant number of Mexicans in Pearce's population is apparent.  
<sup>159</sup> Stanley-Brown, Geological Society of America Bulletin Vol. 42, p. 85.  
<sup>160</sup> Edgar Collins, "Letter to Campbell and Kelly of Tonopah Foundry Co.: Sept. 20, 1912," Box 2, File 2, Commonwealth Mine Records. (Tucson: University of Arizona, Special Collections.)  
<sup>161</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>162</sup> Mayo, "The Death of an Arizona Mining Town," 2.  
<sup>163</sup> Courtland Arizonan 16 April 1910.  
Tombstone Prospector 16 Sept. 1914.  
<sup>164</sup> Courtland Arizonan 26 Dec. 1914.  
<sup>165</sup> Delphine Gonzalez, "Letter to Charles Monmonier of Pearce, Nov. 20, 1944," Box 3, File 7, Monmonier Family Records.  
<sup>166</sup> Richard Shaw, "A Boyhood in the Cochise Stronghold," The Sunsiter (Pearce-Sunsites, Arizona) Dec. 1994: 17.  
<sup>167</sup> Lawrence Michael Fong, "Sojourners and Settlers: The Chinese Experience in Arizona," Journal of Arizona History Autumn, 1980: 250. Hereafter notated as "Sojourners and Settlers"  
<sup>168</sup> Carlos A. Schwantes, ed., Bisbee (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1992) 61.  
<sup>169</sup> Charles Monmonier, "Reminiscences," Monmonier Family Records.  
<sup>170</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>171</sup> Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
<sup>172</sup> Goldman, Gold Diggers and Silver Miners 15-16.  
<sup>173</sup> Schultz, Southwestern Town 28.  
<sup>174</sup> Tombstone Prospector 25 May 1910.  
 9 March 1914.  
<sup>175</sup> Richard Shaw, "A Boyhood in Cochise Stronghold," The Sunsiter Nov. 1994: 32.  
<sup>176</sup> "Notice to Water Users," Box 2, File 2, Commonwealth Records.  
 "Letter to A.C. Kingsley of Arcadia, California, Jan. 17, 1922," Box 2, File 6, Commonwealth Records.  
<sup>177</sup> Richard Shaw, "A Boyhood in the Cochise Stronghold," Dec. 1994: 17.  
<sup>178</sup> Charles Monmonier, "Letter to Basil Monmonier, Sept. 3, 1915," Box 3, File 1, Monmonier Records.  
<sup>179</sup> Tombstone Prospector 23 April 1904.  
<sup>180</sup> Courtland Arizonan 16 April 1910.  
 Although 95 students does not sound like a dramatic increase from 53 when the first schoolhouse opened in 1896, it is a misleading figure. In 1910, the Commonwealth was in a state



of transition as it came under new ownership, and it was not employing many men at that time. The 95 students do not include many of the miners' children who would normally be residing in town.

- 184 Courtland Arizonan 25 April 1910.  
185 Courtland Arizonan 2 June 1910.  
186 Courtland Arizonan 23 June 1914.  
187 Bradshaw, "Historical Data Given on Pearce Cemetery."  
188 Courtland Arizonan 20 July 1912.  
189 Courtland Arizonan 16 April 1910.  
190 Courtland Arizonan 5 Oct. 1912: 1.  
191 Pearce Home Guard and Rifle Club, Box 7, File 5, Monmonier Family Records.  
192 Courtland Arizonan 4 April 1914.  
193 "Chautauqua," Box 1, File 1, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
194 Arizona Range News 4 Sept. 1915.  
195 Sulphur Valley News 24 Nov. 1896.  
196 "Letter to H.W. Albert, April 26, 1912," Box 2, File 14, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
197 Arizona Range News 6 June 1913: 3.  
198 Lynn R. Bailey, We'll All Wear Silk Hats (Tucson: Westernlore, 1994) 176-80.  
199 Commonwealth Mine Records, Box 6, Files 4 and 5.  
200 The Glenn Land & Cattle Co. Went into debt in 1924 and moved to Pinos Altos, N.M.  
201 A.Y. Smith apparently participated in a lot of business unrelated to mining; he served as secretary-treasurer for the Coronado company in 1918 and was chair of the Glenn company.  
202 Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
203 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
204 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
205 Tombstone Prospector 9 March 1919.  
206 Courtland Arizonan 17 Feb. 1917.  
207 Tombstone Prospector 3 June 1914.  
208 "Pearce Pointers," Tombstone Prospector 20 Aug. 1914.  
209 "Letter to an Arizona Mining Company, June 10, 1916," Box 2, File 3, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
210 "Letter to J.W. Furness Wilson, Sacramento, California," Box 2, File 3, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
211 Courtland Arizonan 5 Oct. 1918.  
212 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
213 Tombstone Prospector 9 March 1918.  
214 Tombstone Prospector 29 May 1918.  
215 4 Sept. 1918.  
216 Courtland Arizonan 28 Sept. 1918.  
217 Courtland Arizonan 14 Dec. 1918.  
218 Arizona Range News 14 June 1918.  
219 "Red Cross Work at Pearce," Arizona Range News 23 Nov. 1917: 4.  
220 Courtland Arizonan 12 Jan. 1918.  
221 Courtland Arizonan 23 Nov. 1918.  
222 Courtland Arizonan 29 Nov. 1919.  
223 Courtland Arizonan 29 Nov. 1919.  
224 Dec. 1919; day unknown.  
225 Tombstone Epitaph 15 Dec. 1919.  
226 Courtland Arizonan 7 Aug. 1920.  
227 Courtland Arizonan 13 Mar. 1920.  
228 Town and Country Club, Box 6, File 9, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
229 Tombstone Prospector 9 Oct. 1920.  
230 Box 6, File 8, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
231 Estate of Joseph U. Bignon, Probate Orders, Book 10, p. 313, Cochise County Recorder's Office, Bisbee.  
232 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
233 Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
234 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
235 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
236 Dick Shaw, "A Boyhood in the Cochise Stronghold," The Sunsite Dec. 1994: 17.

- 235 Mayo, History Now, 2.  
236 "Letter to A.C. Kingsley, Jan. 17, 1922," Box 2, File 6, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
237 Courtland Arizonan 24 Jan. 1920.  
238 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
239 George L. Mayo, "The Death of an Arizona Mining Town: Pearce, Arizona and the Politics of Greed," History Now, Nov. 1984: 2 (Tucson: University of Arizona Department of History). Hereafter notated as "The Death of an Arizona Mining Town."  
240 Dick Shaw, "A Boyhood in the Cochise Stronghold," Dec. 1994: 17.  
241 "Letter to A.C. Kingsley, Jan. 17, 1922," Box 2, File 6, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
242 Tombstone Prospector 2 March 1910.  
243 Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
244 Thirteenth U.S. Census, 1910 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
245 Courtland Arizonan 3 Jan. 1914.  
246 7 Dec. 1918.  
247 Tombstone Prospector 2 March 1910.  
248 Fourteenth U.S. Census, 1920 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
249 Letter dated Feb. 2, 1995, from Kenneth Ross, Reference Librarian of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Department of History, Philadelphia.  
250 Minutes of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1928: 574. (Presbyterian Department of History, Philadelphia).  
251 Directory of Churches and Religious Organizations in Arizona, prepared by the Arizona Statewide Archival and Records Project Division of the Professional Service Project Works Projects Administration. (Phoenix, Arizona State Archives and Records Project: March, 1940) n.p.  
252 Records on the Catholic Church in Pearce are almost as scarce as those on Protestant churches. Even the Diocese of Tucson, under whose jurisdiction Pearce belonged, was unable to locate more information for me.  
253 Catholic Church, Diocese of Tucson Records, 1721-1951, Vol. 23 (Tucson, University of Arizona Special Collections) n.p.n.  
254 Description on back of photograph of church, "Pearce Photo File" (Tucson, Arizona Historical Society).  
255 Conversation with Dan Brosnan, Diocese of Tucson Archivist, Feb. 1995.  
256 Catholic Directory of the Diocese of Tucson, 1936 (Tucson: Arizona Catholic Herald, 1936) 99.  
257 Ironically, Tombstone, as hard times settled after the mines ran out of ore, also became a mission out of Benson. Originally, the pastor of Benson was from Tombstone and divided his time between the two places along with the missions. As Tombstone waned, he spent more and more time in Benson.  
258 Catholic Directory of the Diocese of Tucson, 1936, 14, 99.  
259 Black, "History of Education in Cochise County," 65.  
260 Black, "History of Education in Cochise County," 46.  
261 "Letter to F.L. Bryant, Oct. 7, 1929," Box 1, File 4, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
262 "Letter to Thomas Cole, Dec. 5, 1933," Box 1, File 17, Commonwealth Mine Records.  
263 Cosulich, "Two Old Camps Definitely Die."  
264 Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930 Population, Abstract (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932) 159.  
265 Black, "History of Education in Cochise County," 81, 84.  
266 Arizona Range News 30 May 1930.  
267 This figure apparently contradicts the figure of school attendance for the year 1934-35. Both cannot be about 50 unless the only people who inhabited Pearce were children. Evidently, however, the school district covered a larger area than the area counted for population. A 1938 letter from Charles Monmonier to Miss Marie Edwards, a school bus driver, indicates that at least one part of the district, the north end, include eight ranches with a total of 12 children attending school (Monmonier Family Records). It seems the district then was rather large geographically, or at least different from the region ("the little town itself ... [and] those on some nearby ranches") referred to by Bernice Cosulich in her article.  
268 Cosulich, "Two Old Camps Definitely Die."  
269 "Letter to sailor son, June 3, 1942," Box 3, File 2, Monmonier Family Records.  
270 "Letter from Bill Hawke, Jan. 31, 1941," Box 3, File 7, Monmonier Family Records.  
271 O. Carroll Arnold, "Arizona's Forgotten Artist," The Cochise Quarterly Fall 1989: 3.



- Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900 Population, Manuscript Schedule.  
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 Myriam Toles, "Pioneer Painter," The Cochise Quarterly Fall, 1989: 8.  
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 198 Bill Monroe, "Ghost Town Destined for Role as Museum," Arizona Daily Star 15 July  
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CCRO: Cochise County Recorder's Office, Bisbee, Arizona

ASA: Arizona State Archives, Phoenix, Arizona

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# Reviews

**The Great Escape: The Apache Outbreak of 1881** by Charles Collins. Westernlore Press, PO Box 35305, Tucson, 85740; 218 pages, photographs, maps, notes, bibliography and index; hardback, price not available.

The last round of hostilities between the Chiricahua Apaches and their Mexican and gringo neighbors began with an unnecessary action at Cibecue Creek on the San Carlos Reservation in 1881.

Gen. Orlando Willcox, commander of the Department of Arizona, acting on information from a subordinate at Fort Apache, ordered the arrest of a probably harmless spiritual leader. It was feared the medicine man was inciting insurrection and the botched arrest attempt ended in his death and that of several soldiers.

After the fracas at Cibecue, the Chiricahuas believed they would be blamed and punished. A few days later about 150 of them, led by Juh, Naiche and Geronimo, fled the reservation and went into Mexico's Sierra Madre.

Their apprehensions probably had as little basis as Gen. Willcox's, but both the whites and Indians were conditioned by a long history of treachery to be suspicious of each other.

Leaving the Gila River between San Carlos and Camp Thomas, the Apaches crossed into the Aravaipa Valley, went to the Dragoons and across the Sulphur Springs Valley, through the Pedregosas and across the San Bernardino Valley and into Mexico via Guadalupe Canyon. Along the way they gathered a few horses, killed some cattle, had a couple of clashes with pursuing troopers and caused a great deal of journalistic excitement from coast to coast.

This story has been told many times in the various accounts of Apache troubles but never in the detail provided in this volume. Collins, through painstaking research in the National Archives and military records, traces the confusing and often countermanded orders given the Army units in the field where the officers weren't always sure who was in charge. Much of the blame for the failure to contain the outbreak must rest with General of the Army William Tecumseh Sherman, who attempted to direct the campaign from Washington, D.C.

The author personally acquainted himself with the terrain that was the scene of the action and his familiarity adds to the vividness of the story.

— Alden Hayes

**Crimes and Misdeeds: Headlines From Arizona's Past** by W. Lane Rogers. Northland Publishing Co., PO Box 1389, Flagstaff, 86002. 155 pages, photographs, bibliography, index; paperback, \$9.95.

Anyone reading old newspapers soon realizes that history does repeat itself. Divorce cases more than 100 years old could appear in tomorrow's tabloid with no changes. Noted evangelists, who live one life in front of their flock and another behind the scenes, are exposed when their follies are discovered by reporters.

The cases mentioned are just two from this volume by Tucson resident Lane Rogers. The first example involves Dr. John C. Handy, who abused his wife and eventually shot the lawyer she retained to handle her divorce.

The second case is still remembered by many. Famed 1920s evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson showed up in Agua Prieta after a six-week disappearance. Her stay in Douglas

brought the town brief fame and began a spiral of court appearances.

Aimee's story, and that of another woman who became famous enough to become recognizable by use of just her first name, receive the longest chapters. Winnie Ruth Judd, convicted of murdering two friends, was the subject of a popular postcard — the same as Aimee.

Other chapters cover cases close, such as John Dillinger's capture in Tucson and subsequent stay in Douglas, and cases far, such as the three young men on a crime spree in 1930s northern Arizona. All 14 chapters are well-researched yet easy to read, fueling hope that Rogers will follow this, his first published book, with others.

— Cindy Hayostek